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THE LIFE AND SUFFERINGS
OF
OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST

Frontispiece.



VIRGIN AND CHILD.

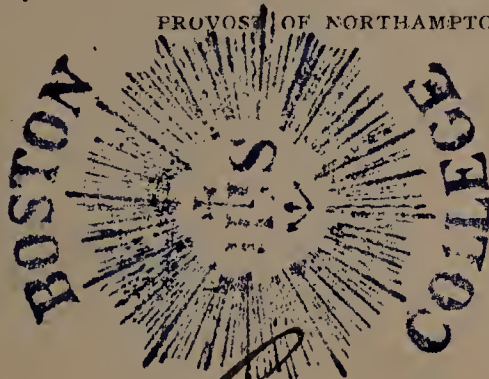
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THE LIFE AND SUFFERINGS
OF
OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST

AS RECORDED BY
THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

BY
THE REV. HENRY RUTTER ^{mc} ^D

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY THE VERY REV. F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D., V.G.
PROVOST OF NORTHAMPTON



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INTRODUCTION.

It is the study and knowledge of Jesus Christ that distinguishes us from Pagans and Infidels. It is not the bare knowledge of God ; for that is common to us with Heathens and Mahometans. It is the knowledge also of our own misery and corruption, and of our absolute need of a Redeemer and Mediator to reconcile us to God, and enable us to approach to him. Jesus Christ is the central point of our religion, and without him we could neither worship God in a worthy manner, nor render him acceptable homage. And yet men fatally neglect this most important of all sciences, the knowledge of Jesus Christ. St. Paul judged himself to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2) ; he undervalued every other science, but the knowledge of his crucified Master. But among men this knowledge is in great measure disregarded. Men pursue every other science with ardour and indefatigable application. They study a thousand things that are vain, if not pernicious ; languages, fables, romances, the world and its laws and fictions, its vanities and pleasures. The merchant is absorbed in his commerce, the capitalist in his speculations. The mechanic gives all his time to his trade and machinery, the man of science is busied with endless researches in Geology, Chemistry, Physiology, and other branches of knowledge. But the only science directly available to salvation is too little esteemed, and too generally neglected.

Eternal life, however, must depend upon the knowledge of Jesus Christ, no less than upon the knowledge of God. And what science after all can be more interesting or attractive? What study can be more pleasing than the life and maxims of a God-man? There is perhaps no study so generally preferred as biography. We love to read the lives of great men in every profession, and we read with increased interest the lives of good men. More especially are we delighted to pore over lives which enlighten and animate us in our own particular profession. How much then should the Life of Christ be valued! In him we have God made Man, the Word made Flesh, dwelling among us, and walking before us. We have his sublime maxims to instruct us, and his holy example to edify and encourage us. He who is the *way*, invites us to walk after him: he who is the *truth*, calls upon us to hear him: he who is the *life*, encourages us to live after his model. *I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also* (St. John xiii. 15.) We are in darkness, and stand in need of a light and a guide. But here is One whom we may safely follow, and who will quickly enlighten us: for he expressly says: *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life* (St. John viii. 12). All his words and actions, his doctrine, his miracles, his labours and his sufferings,—all his life is not only admirable, but one in which every Christian should feel a vivid interest.

Care must be taken, however, to pursue this study in a proper manner. For there are those who read the Life of Christ, and yet do not seek to know him, nor desire to learn of him. The main object of many is to feed their curiosity, to gratify their vanity, pedantry, ambition, or interest. Thus they chiefly attend to curious and unprofitable questions, matters of chronology and philology, and points of Biblical criticism. But this is not the study of Christ Jesus, nor the way to reap solid spiritual advantage and knowledge from his holy life. *You have not so learned Christ*, says the

Apostle, if so be that you have heard him, and have been taught in him (Eph. iv. 20, 21). The remedy is to read his life with suitable dispositions, with simplicity of mind, docility, uprightness of heart, humility, and a sincere desire to learn of him, by whom alone we have *access in one Spirit to the Father* (Eph. ii. 18). If we thus attend to the Life of Christ, and if these things *be with us and abound; they will make us to be neither empty, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 St. Peter i. 8).

To acquire this important and essential knowledge, the Life of Christ drawn out as in the following work will afford the reader valuable assistance. It was the result of long and laborious study of the four Gospels; and presents in a connected form all that the holy Evangelists have recorded under divine inspiration. It furnishes an easy and connected narrative of the whole life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of our divine Redeemer, reconciling apparent discrepancies in the sacred text, elucidating obscure expressions or passages, and by judicious paraphrase, or comment, opening the way to a ready understanding of difficult portions of the Gospel. The Rev. Henry Rutter was a learned divine and judicious critic, and had devoted his life to the careful study of the Holy Scriptures. He was the author of several valuable works analogous to the present. These were his *Explanation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, by an Analysis, a Paraphrase, and a Commentary*, which he published in 1813, and which may be considered as supplementary to his Life of Christ: his *Catholic Epistle of St. Jude, with a Paraphrase and Notes*, and his very valuable work, the *Key to the Old Testament*. Again, his *Summary View of the Apocalypse*, being a supplement to the preceding, as also to his *Life of Christ*;—and his *Summary View and Explanation of the Ancient Prophets*. This was his last work, his death having occurred on the 17th of September, 1838. He died at Dodding Green, in the county of Westmoreland, at the advanced age of eighty-five years, having been one of the

last survivors of the Catholic clergy educated at Douay College.

This *Life of Christ* has always maintained a high character, and been warmly approved and recommended by ecclesiastical authority. It cannot fail to benefit the pious and assiduous reader. It will present him the adorable model of a God made Man, a record of his admirable life and conversation upon earth, a detailed history of his stupendous miracles and sublime discourses, a connected narrative of his bitter sufferings and ignominious death for our redemption, and of his glorious resurrection and ascension for our justification and sanctification. Reading it with proper dispositions cannot fail to make us *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.* (2 St. Peter iii. 18.)

F. C. HUSENBETH, D.D. V.G.,
Provost of Northampton.

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THE LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

PART I.

PREFACE FROM ST. LUKE I. 1—4.

“WHEREAS many have endeavoured to set forth in order a narration of the things which have been accomplished among us,” and the truth of which is confirmed by the fullest evidence, “as they have delivered them to us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word ; it hath seemed good also to me, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the truth of those things wherein thou hast been instructed,” and mayest distinguish them from those inaccurate accounts, which either have been already, or may hereafter, be published on this subject.

St. Luke does not here specify the names of those from whom he received this narrative ; yet it cannot be doubted that the B. V. Mary communicated to him what he has committed to writing in the two first chapters, besides other particulars, since his authors were eye-witnesses, as he expressly testifies. It is highly probable that he derived some information from St. Paul, whose disciple he was, and who received and learned the gospel (Gal. i. 11, 12), which he preached, from the revelation of Jesus Christ, though he was

not himself an eye-witness.—That Theophilus, to whom St. Luke addresses his gospel, was a real, and not a fictitious person, is the most probable opinion, as appears from the title of *most Excellent*, which was only applied to persons of distinguished rank; nevertheless, as the word Theophilus signifies a *Lover of God*, it is, in this sense, applicable to every true Christian, who may consider this gospel as addressed to himself, and as containing the good tidings of eternal life.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINITY AND INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN I. 1—14.

BEFORE we proceed to the temporal birth and life of the Son of God, it may not be improper to give some account of his divine and eternal generation. To Jesus Christ belong two genealogies and two births, because he has two natures. He is both God and man, and in one only person, unites the nature of God and the nature of man. As man, he descends from a long series of men, being of the tribe of Juda, and of the family of David: as God, he has only God for his Father, being born of him before all ages, and perfectly equal to him. As man, he is born in time; as God, he is born, and exists from all eternity. “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark i. 1), according to St. John, thus describes his divine and eternal nativity, and the reasons for which he was made man.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In these words St. John describes the Son of God by three characters expressive of his divinity. The first is his eternal existence: “In the beginning,” *i. e.* before all time, “was the Word,” the

eternal Word, the increated wisdom, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. The second character is his being distinct from God the Father, which evidently points at a distinction of persons ; for a person is really distinct from him with whom he is. Now “the Word was with God” the Father from all eternity, and therefore was distinct from his person. But, lest this distinction of persons might convey an idea of a diversity of nature or essence, and lest under the words *two persons*, we might understand two Gods, the third character is his *consubstantiality* with the Father, “and the Word was God ;” consequently the same God as the Father, for there cannot be more Gods than one.—The Evangelist makes a short recapitulation of these three characters, by repeating that “this Word was in the beginning with God.” He then represents him as an active cause or principle ; 1. In the order of *nature* : “All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made.” Hence it clearly follows, that he is not a creature ; because all things having been made by him, if he himself were made too, he must have been made by himself, and, consequently, he would have had a being before he was made or created, as we conceive a workman to exist before his work. 2. He represents the *Word* as the principle of life and light in the order of *grace*, acting upon sin and darkness in order to give light and life to our souls. This occasions the Evangelist to pass forward to the incarnate state of the Word : “In him was life,” that essential life which consists in living wisdom, in eternal truth, and in sovereign justice ; the knowledge and love of which constitute the true life of man. This divine life assuming a visible body became a light to communicate itself to mankind, by imparting to it the knowledge of truth, and the love of justice or sanctity. This is “the light that shineth in darkness,” enlightening the eyes of men blinded by their passions, and plunged in the dark night of error and sin. Christ diffused on all sides the rays of his light, by the purity of his doctrine, by the

example of his holiness, and by miracles of the most beneficent kind. "And" yet "the darkness" which sin had spread over the hearts of men "did not comprehend it." It was to prevent this abuse of the divine goodness, that "there was a man sent from God, whose name was John" the Baptist. "This man came for a witness to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him" in this light. "He was not the light" himself, "but was to give testimony of the light," by erecting the standard of the Messiah, and placing himself at the head of such as should receive him. "That" person to whom he bore witness, "was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," in different degree and measure, yet superabundantly where no obstacle is set against it.

Although this mission of John had all the success which God, who cannot fail in the execution of his designs, had foreseen; yet it met not with that reception which might naturally have been expected. The Word incarnate, notwithstanding this testimony of John, was rejected by the synagogue, whilst a very small number of its children acknowledged him for the Messiah. This criminal indifference of the former is thus recorded by the Evangelist, and contrasted with the glorious reward of the latter. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him," and yet "the world knew him not; he came into his own" inheritance, viz. the Jews, whom he had made his chosen people, "and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the" adoptive "sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born," by a new spiritual birth in the sacrament of baptism, "not of blood," by circumcision, as children of the seed of Abraham; "nor of the will of the flesh," by carnal descent from their parents; "nor of the will of man," by human adoption; "but of God," by faith and divine grace; who receives us for his children through faith in Christ Jesus, and as such sanctifies us by his Spirit; for as many as are led by the Spirit of

God, they are the sons of God (Rom. viii. 14). "And" it was with the view of elevating man to this dignity, that "the Word was made flesh," becoming man by a true and real union of the divine and human nature in one person, which is the person of God the Son, "and he dwelt amongst us," in all meekness and humility. "And we saw his glory," being eye-witnesses to his miracles, and to the various wonderful actions of his life, which truly displayed "the glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth."—What a subject of consolation to the faithful Christian, that Christ has brought us both truth and grace: truth to teach us our duty, and grace to enable us to practise it. Moreover, as he alone could procure for us the pardon of sin, and that interior justification which the law of Moses could not give, in this sense, he may truly be said to have possessed the *fulness of truth*, having completely fulfilled all former types and shadows of spiritual blessings, giving us an inheritance in the celestial Canaan, and an entrance into the true tabernacle of heaven (see Heb. x. 1, 19).

CHAPTER II.

THE ANNUNCIATION AND CONCEPTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. LUKE I. 1—25.

As the life of Jesus Christ and that of his precursor St. John are interwoven together, the natural order requires that we should begin with the history of the latter, as being introductory to that of the former. This consideration makes St. Luke relate, in the first place, the wonders that signalized the conception of the holy Precursor.

"In the days of Herod" the Great, "the king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zachary, of the rank of Abia," the eighth of the twenty-four families, which, according to the regulation of David, were to serve by turns in the

temple : “ and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elisabeth. And they were both just,” not only in the sight of men, but also “ in the sight of God, walking blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.” This however does not imply that they were exempt from all lesser failings, such as are called *venial* ; but only from those greater sins which would have made them forfeit the grace and favour of God. “ And they had not a son, because Elisabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. Now it came to pass, when he executed the priestly function in the order of his rank before God, according to the custom of the priestly office, it fell to his lot to offer up incense, when he entered into the temple of the Lord ” (for the priests drew lots for the different functions to be weekly performed by them). “ And all the multitude of the people was praying without,” in that part of the temple called the court of the Israelites : “ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar of incense,” which would be to the left hand of the officiating priest ; “ and Zachary seeing him was troubled, and fear seized him : ” perhaps the more so, as it was a common opinion amongst the Jews that death would be the consequence of seeing an angel. “ But the angel said to him : Fear not, Zachary, for thy petition is heard ” respecting the coming of the Messias ; “ and thy wife Elisabeth shall bring forth to thee a son,” who shall be his precursor ; “ and thou shalt call his name John,” which signifies Grace, as a happy presage that the reign of grace is at hand. “ And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth ; for he shall be great,” not only in the estimation of men, who are easily deceived, but also “ in the sight of the Lord : and he shall neither drink wine nor strong drink, and shall be replenished with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,” by bringing them to the knowledge of Christ. “ He shall also go before him in the

spirit and power of Elias," labouring with the same zeal and fervour as did that holy prophet, "that he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," *i. e.* may recal back "the incredulous" Jews of these later times, "to the prudence" and faith "of the" ancient "just;" and may thus "prepare unto the Lord a perfect people," and properly disposed to receive him. "And Zachary," doubting the truth of this promise, "said to the angel: Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answering said to him: I am Gabriel," one of the chief angels, "who stand before God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day when these things come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words which shall be fulfilled in their time. Now the people were waiting for Zachary, and wondered that he staid so long in the temple: and coming out he could not speak to them," either to bless them, or to give a reason of his delay. "And they perceived," from his agitation and trouble, "that he had had a vision in the temple. And he made signs to them, and remained" not only "dumb," but deaf also, as appears from the Greek text, and from the 62nd verse below, where we find that instead of speaking they rather made signs to him. "And it came to pass as soon as the days of his office were expired, he departed to his house" on the mountains of Judea. "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived and kept herself private five months," in the uninterrupted exercises of piety and devotion, "saying: It is thus the Lord hath done to me in the days wherein he hath had regard to take away my reproach among men," on account of barrenness: behold he has made me fruitful, at an age when fecundity generally becomes a subject of confusion.

CHAPTER III.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AND THE
INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST. LUKE I. 26—33.

ST. JOHN was conceived after the fast of the Expiation, which fell on the 10th of the 7th month, called Tisri, and which corresponds pretty nearly to the end of September and the beginning of October: because from the 24th of September till the 24th of June, the day of St. John's nativity, there are precisely nine months. It was six months after his conception that God sent the same angel Gabriel to negotiate with the Blessed Virgin concerning the great mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It is thus related by St. Luke.

“In the 6th month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary: And the angel,” in a visible, corporeal form, “entering in” respectfully “said to her: Hail full of grace, our Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. Which words when she had heard, she was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what kind of salutation this should be,” that is, whether it was a favour from God, or a snare of the devil. We may admire her guarded conduct on this occasion, which shows that she possessed a degree of wisdom and strength of mind far superior to that of her sex. “And the angel,” seeing her uneasiness, “said to her: Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God,” and art blessed beyond any other woman, having the honour of being raised to the highest dignity which God could confer upon his creatures. “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name *Jesus*. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his

father [his maternal ancestor], and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever," that is, over the Church of God composed of Jews and Gentiles: "and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Such are the characters of Christ's greatness here foretold by the angel. He shall be great: 1. In his descent or origin, being truly the eternal Son of God. 2. In his dignity, being the great King that was to reign over the throne of his father David. But his kingdom is not of this world; it is only of a spiritual nature: he reigns over the minds of men by faith, over their hearts by charity, and lastly he will reign over all mankind for ever hereafter either in a state of happiness or misery, according to each one's respective merits. 3. His kingdom extends not only over a part of the twelve tribes, but over the whole house of Jacob, *i. e.* the whole Church of God, composed of the children of Jacob according to the flesh, and of the children of Jacob according to the spirit; who see God by faith, and who live in hopes of seeing him face to face hereafter in glory. The 4th character of Christ's kingdom is its duration; for it is not to be interrupted by captivities, nor diminished by length of time, but, after continuing through ages, will endure to all eternity.

But, "Mary," attentive to the preservation of her virginity, which she had promised to God by a vow, "said to the angel: how shall this be done, because I know not man;" for she could form to herself no idea of any mode of conception but such as is in the ordinary course of nature, which was incompatible with her vow. Her request therefore to the angel did not proceed from any disbelief, nor from any vain curiosity, but from a commendable prudence, being desirous of knowing how she might comply with the will of God without prejudice to her former engagement. "And the angel answering said to her," that she had nothing to fear with regard to her virginity; because her conception was to be the work of the Holy Ghost: "The Holy Ghost,"

said he, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy" Fruit "which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And," as a proof of what I say, "behold thy cousin Elisabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month to her, who is called barren; because nothing shall be impossible to God." Wherefore as he has enabled thy cousin to conceive, notwithstanding her old age and barrenness, so will he render thee fruitful without any detriment to thy virginal integrity. "And Mary," in submission to God's will, without any farther inquiries, expressed her full consent in these humble but powerful words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word:" showing hereby that the mystery of the incarnation was a work that depended on the omnipotency of God, as did the first creation of the world. "And the angel departed from her," full of astonishment at the wonderful mystery which was now accomplished.

Thus did the Blessed Virgin, by her happy assent to the angel's proposal, repair that unhappy assent by the first woman to the devil's suggestion. For in the moment she expressed her consent, she immediately conceived by the Holy Ghost; who by his almighty power formed a body out of her purest blood, and created an immortal soul for that body: and this body and soul were at the same instant assumed, and united to the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the second Person of the adorable Trinity. Thus was accomplished the great mystery of the incarnation, that mystery of love and mercy which had been promised to mankind 4000 years before, which had been foretold by so many prophets, and desired by so many saints. God was made man, and man, in the Divine Person, was made God, and the Virgin Mary was made Mother of God. It is an ancient tradition, as St. Austin observes, that this mystery was completed on the 25th of March, which is therefore kept as a feast of obligation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISITATION. LUKE I. 39—56.

Now in those days, soon after the above-mentioned embassy, “Mary rising up,” without considering her new dignity, or the inconveniences of the journey, “went with speed into the mountainous country, to a city of Juda,” which St. Luke does not name, but which was probably Hebron, situated in the hilly country of Juda, and which with the neighbouring villages has been allotted by Josue for the habitation of the priests (Josue xxi. 9). This place was at the distance of about four or five days’ journey from Nazareth.

As the feast of the Passover was now approaching, it is most likely that Joseph accompanied the Blessed Virgin as far as Jerusalem; and that, after the feast, he returned home to Nazareth, whilst his spouse continued her journey alone to Hebron. It is clear from the suspicions subsequently entertained by him, that he was not present at the first interview between Mary and Elisabeth. We remark, on this occasion, the words of Elisabeth, how expressive they are of her great respect and veneration for Mary, whilst the answer of the Blessed Virgin breathes nothing on her part but the most profound humility.

The Blessed Virgin “entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant,” animated by the Holy Ghost, by a preternatural motion, “leaped in her womb,” showing thereby the early knowledge he had of the presence of his Redeemer; “and Elisabeth” herself “was” likewise “filled with the Holy Ghost, and,” in terms of admiration and thanksgiving, “cried out with a loud voice, and said” to her kinswoman Mary, “Blessed art thou amongst women, and Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And

whence is this "favour "to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy," giving me thereby to understand, that thou barest in thy womb the Son of God, whose precursor he is to be. "And blessed art thou that," without any hesitation, "hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord."

"And Mary said," referring to God alone the whole glory of her exalted privilege: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid," in choosing me to be the mother of his Son; "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed: Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me, and holy is his name, and his mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear him. He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and those of an humble condition he hath exalted. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath favoured his servant Israel, being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our forefathers Abraham and his seed for ever," when he formed with them that alliance described in the 17th and 22nd chapter of Genesis. "Now Mary staid with her cousin Elisabeth about three months, and then returned to her own home," whether after or before St. Elisabeth was delivered of St John is uncertain.

The above canticle, which is called the *Magnificat*, is the first recorded in the New Testament, and both in dignity of sentiment and majesty of style, equals if not surpasses all those of the ancient prophets. It is daily recited by the ministers of God's church, as the most perfect model of thanksgiving and praise for the incarnation of the Son of God, and therefore cannot be too often repeated by every grateful Christian. In this Canticle the B. Virgin admirably

displays the humble sentiments which penetrated her soul even in her highest exaltation. Elisabeth had by her praises extolled her above all others of her sex, but Mary refers the whole glory to God alone; and in an ecstasy of joy, breaks forth into praises of her bountiful Saviour, who, notwithstanding her meanness and unworthiness, had made choice of her to co-operate in so great a work as the redemption of man: she confidently asserts that on this account her happiness would be proclaimed by all the nations of the earth. With a grateful heart she admires the astonishing wonders which God has wrought in her in this mystery, 1. By uniting man to God in the same person; a work incomprehensible to the human mind: 2. By rendering the conception of his divine Son, both in his and her regard, perfectly holy, and exempt from all that corruption which is incident to the origin of man: and lastly, by displaying his mercy from age to age in favour of those that fear him; the incarnation being a mystery of mercy, which opens to them the gate of Heaven, hitherto shut against all mankind. Elisabeth had congratulated the Blessed Virgin on the firmness of her faith as the meritorious cause of her great exaltation; Mary tacitly refuses such congratulation from a sentiment of humility, by reminding her that God had chosen her on this occasion for this greatest of his works, because she was the meanest of his servants; as he had on former occasions displayed the strength of his arm by crushing the proud, and showing favour to the humble, by raising up to the throne those who were in a low station of life, and by filling the poor with good things, whilst the rich he sent empty away. Thus had he likewise acted in her regard, by choosing on this occasion for his mother a poor, unknown maid, preferably to all the illustrious persons, however distinguished by their riches and personal accomplishments. Lastly, Mary had received from her cousin the most hearty thanks for the honour of her visit; but she answers that these are due to God alone, who at length had been mindful of his mercy, and visited his

people to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies, by sending his Son according to the promise which he had made to Abraham and his posterity for ever.

CHAPTER V.

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. LUKE I. 57—80.

Now Elisabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son," whose birth was attended with many wonderful circumstances. "And her neighbours and kinsfolks heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy towards her, and they congratulated with her," thus fulfilling in part what the angel had foretold. "And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by his father's name Zachary. And his mother," who knew by revelation what the angel had said to her husband, "answering, said: Not so, but he shall be called John (which signifies grace, pity, mercy). And they said to her: there is no one of thy kindred that is called by this name:" but finding her determined on this point, "they made signs to his father," because he was deaf as well as dumb, to signify "how he would have him called. And demanding a writing-table he wrote, saying: John is his name. And they all wondered," that the parents, apparently without any previous agreement, should thus both assign the same name, which was totally foreign to their kindred, thence concluding it must be the effect of the divine interposition. "And immediately" Zachary's "mouth was opened, and he recovered his speech, and he spoke blessing God," for his great goodness both to himself and to all mankind, in visiting them in the most tender bowels of his mercy. "And a" prodigious "fear came upon all their neighbours; and all these things were noised abroad over all the mountainous country of Judea;" viz. the apparition of the angel to

Zachary, his foretelling to him the birth of the child, the father's incredulity and immediate punishment, and lastly, the instantaneous recovery both of his voice and hearing; an event which had been witnessed by numbers. "And all who heard" these things "laid them up in their hearts, saying: what a child, think you, will this be? for the hand of the Lord hath been with him. And his father Zachary was replenished with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied saying:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people: and he hath raised up to us a powerful salvation in the family of David his servant. As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who were from the beginning, that he would save us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to show his mercy towards our fathers, and to be mindful of his holy testament," or covenant made with them respecting the Messiah, "according to the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant us; that being delivered from the hand of our" spiritual "enemies" Satan and sin, "we may serve him" with a free, generous love, "without fear, in holiness and justice before him, all our days." Then addressing the young child whom God had given him, he said: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" in the minds and hearts of mankind, "to give the knowledge of salvation [*i. e.* of the Messiah] to his people, for the remission of their sins, through the bowels of the mercy of our God, by which the Rising Light hath visited us from on high: to enlighten them that sit in the darkness" of error and ignorance, "and in the shades of the death" of sin, "to direct our feet in the ways of" true and everlasting "peace."

This canticle of Zachary, which the Church daily recites at Lauds, may be divided into two parts. The first contains a thanksgiving for the inestimable benefit of the incarnation:

the second is a prophecy which regards St. John Baptist, who was to prepare the world for that great event. 1. Zachary blesses the Lord, the God of the true Israel, for having vouchsafed to visit his people, not as formerly by means of his prophets, but by sending his own divine Son, whom he clothed with our human nature. 2. He glorifies him for having redeemed them from the slavery of sin, of the devil, of concupiscence, and of death. 3. For having erected the standard of salvation, and established an everlasting kingdom in the house of his servant David, *i. e.* in his holy Catholic Church, in spite of all the opposition from the devil, the world, and the flesh. He further specifies the particulars of the infinite blessing thus conferred upon man, which implied our deliverance from all evils, and our enjoyment of all good things. God had by his prophets promised us salvation from all our enemies, both visible and invisible: these are the world and the flesh, the devil, sin, and concupiscence. This promise he now begins to fulfil; that we may serve our God without fear, in holiness and justice all our days. It may be remarked that Zachary here expresses himself as if speaking of what had already passed: this he does, not only to show, after the manner of the prophets, his certainty of what was to come, but also that the great work of our redemption was now begun by the mystery of the incarnation, and therefore, that the other parts belonging to it would follow, of course, in order to its perfect accomplishment.

“And the child grew, and was strengthened in spirit,” as he advanced in age; “and he was in the desert till the day of his manifestation to Israel,” when he publicly announced the coming of the Messiah in the manner hereafter related. The immediate reason of his retiring into the desert, was probably the persecution of Herod; at least such is the reason assigned by Peter of Alexandria in the 6th general council. As the son of Zachary was at that time only about seven months old, his miraculous conception and birth might

afford grounds of suspicion to that tyrant, and therefore he might easily have been involved in the bloody decree of extermination; especially as the hills of Judea were not very far distant from Bethlehem. It has been piously believed that he was conducted into the desert by his mother, and there fed by angels, after her death. St. John lived in the desert till the age of 30, and there exhibited a specimen of the eremetical life which was afterwards embraced by so many holy men. He had neither scrip nor servant, says Origen (Hom. 25 in Matt.), nor so much as a cottage to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather: he devoted his whole time to the exercises of holy prayer and contemplation, leading a most austere, penitential life, and disdaining, as St. Jerome says, to behold worldly vanities with eyes which coveted only to see Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW. MATT. I. 1—17.

ST. MATTHEW intending in his Gospel to represent Jesus Christ as the promised Messias, foretold by the prophets and prefigured in the Old Testament, begins by ascertaining his dignity from his royal descent and miraculous birth.

“The book of the generation,” or of the genealogy “of Jesus Christ,” who was avowedly to be “the son of David the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judas and his brethren. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begot Esron, and Esron begot Aram; and Aram begot Abinadab, and Abinadab begot Naasson, and Naasson begot Salmon: and Salmon begot Booz of Rahab, and Booz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Salomon of her that had been” the

wife " of Urias ; and Salomon begot Roboam, and Roboam begot Abias, Abias begot Asa ; and Asa begot Josaphat, and Josaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Osias," not immediately ; for three generations are omitted, as we find 2 Paralip. xxii. There it is said that Joram begot Ochosias, and Ochosias begot Joas, and Joas begot Amasias, and Amasias begot Osias. This omission was not material to St. Matthew's design of showing the Jews that Jesus their Messiah was of the family of David ; he being equally the son or descendant of David, whether these three generations be omitted or not. " And Osias begot Joatham, and Joatham begot Achaz, and Achaz begot Ezechias ; and Ezechias begot Manasses, and Manasses begot Amon, and Amon begot Josias ; and Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration to Babylon." This Jechonias is the same who is elsewhere called Eliachim and Joachim, whom Neco king of Egypt placed on the throne of Juda. This prince had a son called Joachim, surnamed by the prophet Jechonias, and he is the person who was the father of Salathiel mentioned in the following verse. " And after the transmigration to Babylon, Jechonias begot Salathiel, and Salathiel begot Zorobabel," who obtained leave of Darius the king of Persia to return back from Babylon into Judea. " And Zorobabel begot Abiud, and Abiud begot Eliacim, and Eliacim begot Azor ; and Azor begot Sadoc, and Sadoc begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud ; and Eliud begot Eleazar, and Eleazar begot Mathan, and Mathan begot Jacob ; and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ, *i. e.* the *Anointed*, so often and so solemnly promised by God to his people. " So all the generations from Abraham to David " are " fourteen generations, and from David to the transmigration of Babylon fourteen generations, and from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ " there " are " also " fourteen generations." The first class of fourteen begins with Abraham, and ends with David. The second class begins with Salomon, and ends with

Jechonias. The third class is supposed to begin with Salathiel, and to end, says St. Jerome, with our Saviour Christ. But thus we shall only find in the third class thirteen generations, and in all only forty-one instead of forty-two persons. Not to mention other interpretations, the conjecture of St. Epiphanius seems the most probable, that we are to understand as mentioned above two Jechoniases, the father and son, who had the same name: so that the true reading should be *Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren, and Jechonias begot Jechonias*, and Jechonias begot Salathiel. Thus Jechonias named in the 12th verse is not the same, but the son of him that was named in the 11th verse; and from Jechonias the son begins the third class, and so Christ will be the last or fourteenth person in that last series or class.

There are several difficulties in reconciling this genealogy in St. Matthew with that which St. Luke gives chap. iii.; but without insisting on all the particulars, suffice it to say, that no one can reasonably doubt but that both the Evangelists copied from the genealogical tables, as they were then extant and carefully preserved by the Jews, and especially by those families that were of the tribe of Juda and of the family of David. For if the Evangelists had either falsified, or made any mistake as to these genealogies, the Jews would undoubtedly have objected this against the Gospels, which they never did. The reason of this difference was at that time public, and known to every one, and so was not mentioned. It seems most probable that St. Matthew gives the natural, and St. Luke the legal line of St. Joseph, the term used by the former being *genuit*, *begot*, which is more expressive of the natural genealogy than that made use of by St. Luke.

CHAPTER VII.

JOSEPH IS ADMONISHED, BY AN ANGEL, OF THE CONCEPTION OF CHRIST. MATT. I. 18—26.

THE blessed Virgin returned home to Nazareth after a stay of about three months with her cousin Elisabeth in the hilly country of Judea. Her pregnancy now became very perceptible to St. Joseph. But St. Matthew not having recorded each circumstance which attended the conception of Jesus Christ, takes care to guard the minds of his readers against all false ideas they might otherwise form concerning it; and after remarking that Mary was become pregnant before she and her husband Joseph came together, adds, that this was effected by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

“Now the generation of Christ was thus. When Mary his mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child” by the operation “of the Holy Ghost,” without ceasing to be a virgin. “And Joseph her husband,” knowing her strict virtue, was surprised at this her pregnancy, but “being a just man, and not willing to expose her to public shame,” by denouncing her to the judges as an adulteress, or giving her a bill of divorce, “he had a mind to dismiss her privately,” committing the whole cause to God. Let us learn from hence to be ever tender in all that regards the reputation of our neighbour, and to have that true charity and simplicity whereof St. Joseph here sets us so eminent an example. “But whilst he was thinking of these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying : Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife ; for that which is conceived in her is” the work “of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus [which means a *Saviour*] ; for he shall save his people from their sins. And all this was done that it might be fulfilled what the Lord spoke by the prophet (Isa.

vii. 14), saying : Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son : and they shall call his name *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted, is, God with us," because he shall be both God and man. "And Joseph rising up from sleep did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he knew her not, till she brought forth her first born," without any detriment to her virginity, "and called his name *Jesus*."

St. Jerome assures us, that St. Joseph always preserved his virgin chastity ; and it is *of faith* that nothing contrary thereto ever took place with his chaste spouse the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was given her by heaven to be the protector of her chastity, to secure her from calumnies in the birth of the Son of God, and to assist her in his education, and in her journeys, fatigues and persecutions. We cannot sufficiently admire their silence on this occasion. Mary, although conscious of the anxiety which preyed upon her husband's mind, yet ventured not to explain to him the mystery of her pregnancy. She deemed herself not warranted to attribute to her own person so distinguishing and extraordinary a mark of the divine favour, as was that of having conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The holy Joseph was unwilling on his part to hint to her the cause of his anxiety, lest the mention of it might occasion trouble and uneasiness to her delicate mind. But God, by thus recording the disposition of St. Joseph, and the strict silence observed by both parties, has furnished us with an uncontrovertible proof of the spotless purity of the Blessed Virgin, and of the divine origin of her Son. For who will not give credit to the testimony of a husband concerning the fidelity of his spouse, when after doubting it, and being on the point of separating from her, he is on a sudden perfectly convinced of the purity of her conduct, and by the most affectionate behaviour evinces that all his doubts are entirely removed ?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST. LUKE II. 1—20.—HIS CIRCUMCISION. LUKE II. 21.

IN the detail of the birth of Jesus given us by St. Luke, we may consider, 1. The preparations preceding it: 2. The humiliating circumstances attending it: 3. The wonders which followed it.

“Now it came to pass in those days, that an edict came out from ” the emperor Octavius, here denominated “Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world,” *i. e.* the whole Roman empire, “should be enrolled,” with the view of ascertaining its riches and strength. “This first enrolment was made by Cyrenus,” otherwise Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, afterwards “president of Syria.” But though on the part of the emperor this regulation originated from vain and political views, on the part of God it proceeded from an overruling order of his divine providence, that by this most authentic public act, it might be manifest to the whole world, that Christ was descended from the house of David and tribe of Juda. “For all went to be enrolled, every one to his own city,” from whence he originally sprung. “And Joseph also went up out of Galilee from the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was of the family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, now big with child. And it came to pass, when they were there, her time of being delivered was accomplished; and she brought forth her first” and only “born son” Jesus Christ; and this she did without the pains of delivery, remaining both in and after his conception and birth a pure virgin. She stood in need of no assistance usual to those of her sex on such occasions; she herself “wrapped him up in swaddling clothes,” such as her poverty had allowed her to prepare; “and,” for want of a cradle, “laid him in a manger” upon straw. The stable to which they had

resorted for shelter, was a cave made on the side of a rock, and according to St. Jerome, lay on the south side of the city. It is a common tradition, that an ox and an ass were in it at that time ; though this circumstance is not mentioned in holy scripture. Joseph and Mary were reduced to the necessity of taking up with this poor stable, “ because there was no room for them in the inn,” either on account of the great concourse of people there assembled, or by reason of their extreme poverty, which might prejudice the inn-keepers against them. Certain it is, that our Blessed Redeemer chose willingly to be born in this manner ; and this he did in order to give us an example of humility, poverty, and self-denial, in opposition to that triple concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John ii. 16), which reigns in the world, and which is the source of all our spiritual maladies.

God was pleased that his Son, though born on earth with so much secrecy, and in a state of the most astonishing humiliation, should yet be acknowledged by men, and receive the first fruits of their homage and devotion upon his appearance among them. But who are they that are favoured with the honour of this heavenly call ? These happy persons were not the great ones of the world, but certain “ shepherds ” who “ were in the same country, watching and keeping the night watches over their flock ” against robbers and wolves. “ And behold,” whilst the sensual and the proud were reposing on beds of down, or employed in pursuits of voluptuousness, vanity and ambition, “ an angel of the Lord stood by ” these humble, poor men, “ and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them : Fear not, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people : For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the City of David.” He is born, “ and this shall be a sign unto you : you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.” This is that child who

is the son of David, and the Messiah (that is the *anointed*), so long expected by your fathers, who is to reign over you, and to deliver you from all your enemies. We may observe how the angel pointed out to the shepherds by what marks they might know Jesus from all others, exactly specifying both the place wherein they would find him and the manner of his being lodged; and this was a caution against the doubts they might otherwise have entertained on finding him in so poor and humiliating a situation. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God" for this transcendent display of his goodness to sinful man, "and saying: Glory to God" who dwelleth "in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will;" *i. e.* glory and praise are given to God in the highest heavens by all the celestial host to whom all those upon earth join in their echoes of praise and glory. The subject of this praise and glory is, that God has blessed the earth with a complete and everlasting peace, in sending his only Son to be born amongst us, in order to effect our pardon and reconciliation, by that eternal alliance which he contracted with our human nature. "And it came to pass after the angels departed from them into heaven," singing the praises of God, and thereby establishing the reality and credibility of the embassy they were charged with, "the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that has come to pass, which the Lord hath shown us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing" him in this low state, "they understood the word which was spoken to them of this child," and published it abroad. "And all that heard wondered: and at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But," amidst these occurrences, "Mary" was silent and "kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." In effect, the great things which God works in his servants naturally produce in them silence, astonishment, and something divine, which excludes

all expression : and so, in the present instance, Mary, unable to express what she inwardly felt in her heart, is fixed in silent thought on her divine Son, catching attentively the words that were spoken of him, and laying them up carefully in her heart. “ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard, and seen, as it was told unto them.”

We may justly admire their conduct on this occasion, which shows their ready submission, their confidence in God, their zeal, their faith and gratitude, in the most amiable light. 1. They showed their prompt obedience, by immediately following the voice which called them to the crib of Jesus. 2. They testified their confidence in God’s providence, by leaving their flocks under his care and protection during their absence, and in so dangerous a time as the darkest part of the night. 3. By making all possible haste, they showed their great zeal and devotion : and their faith was equally manifested, both by assenting to whatever the angel told them, however contrary to all human appearance and to the evidence of sense, as well as by making an outward profession of this belief, and by imparting to all their neighbours the knowledge of this divine Infant, as the Lord and promised Messias. Lastly, their gratitude appears by their praising and blessing God for allowing them to be the witnesses of such wonders. Let Christians, in contemplating this mystery, enter into the same sentiments : let them exult with holy joy in God their Redeemer, and pay to him the just homages of their adoration, praise, and love.

“ And after eight days were accomplished that the child was to be circumcised, his name was called *Jesus*, as he was named by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb ” of his mother.

Circumcision was a sacrament of the old law, and the first legal observance required by Almighty God of his chosen people the Jews ; and this on two several accounts : 1. As a distinguishing mark between them and the rest of mankind.

2. As a seal to the covenant made between God and their patriarch Abraham. This law of circumcision continued in force till the death of Christ, and he himself was pleased to submit to it, though without any obligation on his part. This he did for the following reasons: 1. To put an end in an honourable manner to a divine though temporary institution; for it *became him*, who came to teach mankind obedience to the laws of God, to *fulfil all justice*, and therefore to be *made under the law*, *i. e.* to be circumcised, that he might *redeem them that were under the law*, by freeing them from the servitude of it. 2. To prove the reality of his human body; which, however evident from this and so many other actions and sufferings of his life, was denied by several ancient heretics. 3. To prove himself not only the Son of man, but of that man in particular of whose seed the Messiah was promised; thus precluding any future objection that might be raised by the Jews against his divine mission in quality of Messiah, under the pretence of his being an alien. 4. Christ here gives us an early pledge of his love for us, of his compassion for our miseries, and of his utter detestation of sin. With infinite zeal for his Father's honour, and charity for us sinners, with infinite patience and the most profound humility, he now offered himself most cheerfully to his Father, to undergo whatever he was pleased to enjoin him. 5. By this ceremony he humbled himself to satisfy for our pride, and to teach us the sincere spirit of humility. What greater humiliation can be imagined, than for him, who is the eternal Son of God, in all things equal to his Father, to conceal these glorious titles under the appearance of a sinner? 6. By beginning the great work of our salvation in the manner he was one day to finish it; suffering in his own person the punishment of sin, to deliver us from both sin and its punishment, he confounds the impenitence of those who will suffer nothing for their own sins; and he inculcates the necessity of a spiritual circumcision, whereof the external was but the type and figure, as the apostle puts us in mind,

Romans ii. 29. Let us therefore now circumcise ourselves by works of penance, mortification, and self-denial, by alms-deeds and charity to the poor. In doing this we shall truly honour Jesus Christ in his circumcision, and shall experience him to be truly the Saviour of our souls.

On the day our Lord was circumcised, he received the adorable name of *Jesus*, a name the most glorious and most expressive of his saving power; for he came "to save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). This he effected by the greatest sufferings and humiliations, having "humbled himself," as St. Paul says (Phil. ii. 8), "not only unto death, but even to the death of the cross: for which cause God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:" agreeably to what Christ says of himself, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). The devotion towards this sacred name of Jesus began with the Church itself. This saving name ought never to be pronounced but with respect. For in calling upon Jesus, our Saviour God, we publicly declare, that through him alone, and not from ourselves, the grace of salvation comes. The name was brought from heaven by an angel, as we have seen above; the Father himself gave it to the divine Infant, even before he was conceived in the Virgin's womb. It therefore is our duty not to rob him of the glory which he has thus received: we should be careful not to hinder him from being a *Saviour* to us: with profound humility let us lay open the wounds of our souls before him, that the merits of his life and death may heal and save us.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EPIPHANY, OR ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN.

MATT. II. 1—12.

SCARCE had the birth of Jesus been announced to the Jews by an angel, when the unusual appearance of a star manifested it also to the Gentiles. The shepherds, as the first fruits of the Jews, prefigured the indifference of that people, by the little noise they made on that occasion; whilst the wise men, who were the first fruits of the Gentiles, showed forth the happy effects which the coming of Christ would produce in the pagan world. St. Matthew, who has omitted to detail the circumstances attending the birth of Jesus Christ, has recorded at length this great event of the adoration paid to him by the wise men, which he places under the reign of Herod, who was doubly a stranger to the Jewish people, being a Philistine by birth, and an Idumean by origin. These Magi, who are generally called the three kings, though the scripture is silent as to their quality and number, were probably from Aram or Mesopotamia, or perhaps from Arabia Felix, all situated to the east of Jerusalem; and as they were much given to astrology, Almighty God, by a wonderful condescension, was pleased to instruct them by a new star, probably of an extraordinary splendour and brightness. It could not have been a real star, *i. e.* one of the fixed, the least or nearest of which is, for distance, too remote, and for bulk too enormous, to point out any particular house or city like Bethlehem. It appears to have been a miraculous shining meteor resembling a star, but placed in the lower region of our atmosphere; its motion, contrary to the ordinary course of the stars, performing the part of a guide to these travellers, (as did the pillar of fire to the Israelites in the desert,) accommodating itself to their necessities, disappearing or returning as they could best dispense with its guidance.

In the very night on which Jesus was born, these magi, we may imagine, were busied, perhaps separately, in viewing the heavens, when suddenly they perceived this extraordinary phenomenon appearing upon the confines of Judea. Recalling to mind the prophecy of Balaam, a celebrated prophet of those parts, they judged that so singular an appearance must be the token of the birth of that king who, coming out of Judea, was to conquer all the adjoining countries. The prophecy was as follows: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel, and shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth. And he shall possess Idumea: the inheritance of Seir shall come to their enemies" (Numb. xxiv. 17). These countries were on the confines of Arabia, and as the magi had always understood this prophecy in a literal sense (which however more properly signified the spiritual conquests of the Messias, and the conversion of all nations to the faith), hence they reasonably concluded that they ought to make haste to pay their homage to a king, to whom was promised from above the empire of the earth, hoping thus to secure his alliance and friendship. But God afterwards enlightened their minds concerning the true sense of the above-mentioned prophecy. By communicating to each other their respective discoveries, they agreed to set out together on their journey into Judea, which they possibly might reach upon camels in the space of five or six days.

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem," a town of Juda, "in the days of King Herod" the Great, "behold there came" these "wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east," which announced his birth, "and are come to adore him. And king Herod," who had usurped the kingdom, and was apprehensive of being deposed, "hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be

born. But they said to him : In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet " Micheas (cap. v. 2) : " And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least of the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the Captain, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them. And sending them to Bethlehem, said : Go, and diligently inquire after the child ; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him." This bore the appearance of an invitation to return again to Jerusalem, which at the moment they probably meant to accept. It was undoubtedly owing to the Divine Providence, that this artful prince did not accompany the wise men, and no less so, that he omitted sending some confidential messenger in their company. The reason of this his short-sighted policy might perhaps be his apprehension, lest the success of the search might be defeated, were he to attend it in person, as he was conscious of the hatred and awe which the people bore towards him ; and the very report of his journey into those parts might have been the occasion of the Infant's being removed into some safer situation. The wise men " having heard the king, went their way, and behold the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house " pointed out to them by this miraculous guide, " they found the child, with Mary his Mother : and falling down they adored him," not only as a man of supereminent dignity, but also as their God. Their faith was no wise shaken at the sight of his poverty and humble appearance ; for they had been taught from above to consider in a *Spiritual* and not in an *earthly* light the quality of this new-born King, and that of the kingdom which he was to establish. So far therefore from being shocked at his unkingly appearance, their faith rises and gathers strength on the sight of obstacles which.

humanly speaking, should extinguish it. "And opening their treasures, they offered him gifts," in token of their homage: "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Mysterious gifts! which on the one hand referred to the properties belonging to the infant, and on the other were expressive of the disposition of their own hearts in his regard. In the gold they presented a voluntary tribute as to the great king, in the incense they offered to him a sacrifice of praise as to the true God, and in myrrh they acknowledged his having a true human body like ours. They likewise may be considered as offering to him, with the gold, the affection of their hearts; with the incense, all the respect and adoration their minds were capable of: and with the myrrh, all their actions and sufferings as men. It is with the like dispositions we ought frequently to draw near in spirit to him, making him an affectionate tender of our hearts, but first cleansed by tears of sincere repentance.

The holy kings being about to return home, God, who saw the hypocrisy and malicious designs of Herod, by a particular intimation, diverted them from their purpose of carrying back word to Jerusalem where the child was to be found. So, "having received an answer in their sleep that they should not return to Herod," leaving their affections with their Infant-Saviour, "they went back another way into their own country." Herod, though equally suspicious as violent in his temper, yet seems not to have been alarmed at their not returning back to him. He was perhaps willing to believe that they had not been successful in their search, and therefore that they would be ashamed to pass again through Jerusalem, where they might naturally expect the scoffs and raileries of his courtiers and of the people: and we may well conceive the tyrant happy at the moment, under the idea of having escaped the censures of the public, by his not having openly joined in the fruitless search.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE, AND THE
PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN. LUKE II. 21—38.

It appears from Abel's offering the firstling of his flock (Gen. iv. 4), that Almighty God, from the beginning, required the first born of every creature to be offered to him, as to the Creator and Proprietor of all things. Men, more especially, were to be consecrated to God's service; clean beasts were to be sacrificed, the fat burnt, and the flesh given to the priests: but the unclean animals were to be redeemed for a certain price, which was given to the priests: and the first fruits of the earth and trees were to be presented to the Lord, heaved or waved on the altar, and then to be given to the priests. If this regulation did not take place at the very beginning of the world, as is highly probable, it became at least a strict law, upon the Lord's delivering all the *first born* of man and beast among the Israelites from the hand of the destroying angel, in the night when he slew all those of the Egyptians. Thus, till the time of Moses and the written law, the priesthood belonged to the first born, except where some special election was made of another, as in the case of Jacob. Then it was God chose in their stead the tribe of Levi (Numb. iii. 12), as a reward for their not joining in the worship of the *molten calf*, and exempted the first born of the other tribes from a compliance with this injunction, on condition of their acknowledging their former obligation to it. This they did by being presented in the temple, and redeemed by a sum of money, which appears to have been five shekels, or about 15s. sterling.

There was another law which regarded the Blessed Virgin, ordaining that a woman after a child-birth should continue for a certain time in a state called by that law *unclean*; during which she was not to appear in public, nor presume to



CHRIST'S PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.



touch anything consecrated to God. This term was of forty days upon the birth of a son, the time was double for a daughter ; on the expiration whereof the mother was to offer two animals in the temple, one for a holocaust or burnt-offering in lieu of her son, who by the letter of the law was devoted, and as it were confiscated to the Almighty ; the other was for a *sin-offering*, and to be the price of her being cleansed from those impurities which both she and her infant contracted in her child-bearing. A young pigeon or turtle-dove, by way of sin-offering, was required of all, whether rich or poor ; and if the party were competently rich, she offered a lamb for the holocaust, but if poor, she had the option to offer either two young pigeons or two turtle-doves, as it suited her convenience.

As our Saviour had been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and his Blessed Mother always remained a spotless Virgin, it is evident that they were not subject to the law in question. Yet they complied exactly with all the ordinances of it : 1. To prevent the scandal which others might have taken who were ignorant of their high privileges. 2. To set before us an example of obedience, and to induce us willingly to submit to all the laws of God and his Church. Wherefore, “after” the wise men were departed, and “the” forty “days of” Mary’s “purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried” Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ; as it is written in the law of the Lord : “Every male opening the womb shall be called holy,” *i.e.* shall be consecrated “to the Lord : and to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons,” suitable to their mean condition. But the Lamb by which all other oblations were rendered acceptable, the Blessed Virgin carried in her arms, namely, her own divine Son, who now renewed, in a solemn and public manner, the oblation of himself to his Father, which he had already made privately in the first moment of his incarnation. Every sacrifice comprises two

essential and distinct parts, the *oblation* and the *immolation*. The immolation was reserved for Mount Calvary; the oblation is now made in the temple. Between the presentation and the crucifixion there exists a close connection: there is the same victim, the same priest, the same God, the same sacrifice: it begins to-day; it will then be consummated.

“And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him.” Whether he was a priest or not does not appear from the Gospel, nor from the Fathers. “And he had a revelation from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord: and he came” moved “by the spirit into the temple; and when his parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also,” with great devotion and humility, “took him into his arms,” as the object of all his affections, “and blessed God and said,” being now perfectly satisfied, and desiring no longer to see the light of this world, nor any creatures on earth: “Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,” and not for the Jews alone; “a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

This canticle has two parts. In the first, Simeon blesses God for this signal favour in his regard. He expresses himself sensible that God had prolonged his existence until he should see the Messiah; and adds, that having now witnessed with his eyes this Saviour whom God had sent, and for whose coming he had so long sighed, no further wish remained to him, and therefore that he should now die contented. Accordingly, after reminding God of the promise formerly made to him, he acknowledges its being fulfilled, and expresses his hopes of quickly departing this life in peace. In the remaining part of the canticle, Simeon declares the reason of the great joy and satisfaction he has

in leaving the world, viz., not merely this transient view of the Messiah, but (speaking in the language of the prophets, of future times as if already passed), the certainty he is under, that God has presented this his Son to the view of all nations, to be the object of their faith and worship. To the Gentiles he comes as a light to enlighten them by the true faith, and to the Jews he is a subject they may glory in, before all other nations, as being the favoured nation, from which the Saviour of the world originated, and from which all others shall derive the author of their eternal salvation.

To this first testimony in favour of Jesus, the holy Simeon adds another extremely afflicting to his Blessed Mother. For when "his father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him, Simeon," as an old man if not as a priest, "blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel," according to the good or bad use they make of his graces; "and for a sign which shall be contradicted" by the wicked, who oppose his doctrine and the establishment of his kingdom. "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce," when on Mount Calvary thou shalt witness the sorrows of thy beloved Son, together with the reproaches and blasphemies that shall be uttered against him: "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," and disclosed, when some shall believe, and others remain hardened in their obstinacy.

"And," besides Simeon, "there was one Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser," who likewise bore testimony in favour of Jesus. "She was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity," *i. e.* only seven years in the married state; "and she was a widow until" about "four-score and four years: who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day." The redemption of the world by the promised Messiah, then much spoken

of and expected, was probably the chief subject of her devotions, as well as of Holy Simeon's; and St. Austin is of opinion that she would not marry again, because it was no longer the time to contribute to this mystery by the married state, but to serve God in a more holy manner by purity and continency. "Now she, at the same hour, coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him to all" of Jerusalem "that looked for the redemption of Israel."

It was on this occasion that the prophecy of Aggeus and Malachy (Agg. ii. 7, 9; Mal. iii. 1) was fulfilled, when speaking of the second temple, they declare that however inferior it might be to the first, it shall be more honoured by the presence of *the Desired of all nations*. "The desired of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. . . . Great shall be the glory of this last house more than the first, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT OF JESUS INTO EGYPT. MATT. II. 13—23.

"AFTER" Mary and Joseph "had" thus "performed all things according to the law of the Lord, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise and take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him." This sudden and unexpected flight must have exposed this holy family to many inconveniences and sufferings in so long a journey, as the greater part of the way lay through deserts, and among strangers; yet St. Joseph alleges no excuses, nor inquires when they were to return, resigning himself to all the dispensations of Providence. St. Chrysostom observes, that God treats thus all his servants, sending them frequently trials, to

clear their hearts from the rust of self-love ; but, at the same time, intermixing seasons of consolation. “ Joseph, says he (Hom. viii. in Matt.), is anxious on seeing the Virgin with child : an angel removes that fear ; he rejoices at the child’s birth, but a great fear succeeds ; the furious king seeks to destroy the child, and the whole city is in an uproar to take away his life. This is followed by another joy, the adoration of the magi ; a new sorrow then arises, he is ordered to flee into a foreign, unknown country, without help or acquaintance.” Accordingly he “ arose and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt ; and he was there ” about a year, *i. e.* “ until the death of Herod. That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet ” Osee (chap. xi. 1), “ saying : *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.* ” It is the opinion of the holy fathers, that upon their entering Egypt, at the presence of the child Jesus, all the oracles of that superstitious country were struck dumb, and the statues of their gods trembled, and in some places fell to the ground, according to Isaiah xix. : “ And the statues of the Egyptians shall be shaken in his presence.” It is believed that the holy family took up their habitation in the town of Hermopolis, and to this day is shown a place called *Matara*, between Cairus and Heliopolis, where is a fountain in which the holy Virgin is said to have washed the linen of the infant Jesus, and which is held in great veneration throughout the whole country.

“ Then Herod,” who had informed himself of the birth of the king of the Jews only with a view to destroy him, “ perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, and sending killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men,” conceiving that this new-born king would be in the number of the slain. But what does human prudence avail when counteracted by the wisdom of God ?—It is probable that this most barbarous and inhuman

order was not executed by a sudden irruption or promiscuous massacre, as is usually supposed, and as painters choose to represent it, but with some show of a judiciary process. The soldiers, led on by their officers, went from house to house with the most recent and exact list of the inhabitants, forcing them to produce such children as came within the description of the bloody edict, and these they massacred in the sight of the disconsolate parents.

“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet (chap. xxi. 15) saying: *A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.*” Rama is a village not far from this town, and the sepulchre of Rachel was in a field belonging to it. The slaughter also was probably extended into the neighbouring tribe of Benjamin, which descended from Rachel. The prophet, by an excellent *prosopopeia*, attributes to Rachel the cries and moanings of the women of Bethlehem, because her sepulchre was near to that city on the road to Jerusalem. These innocent victims were the flowers and the first fruits of the martyrs, and it was their peculiar glory, not only to die for the sake of Christ, but also in the place of Christ, or in his stead.

“But when Herod was dead,” which, according to some chronologers, happened that same year in December, but more probably at the end of March or the beginning of April in the following year, “behold an angel of the Lord,” most likely Gabriel as before, “appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead who sought the life of the child. Who arose and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus,” a cruel and jealous prince, “reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee,” then under the dominion of his brother Herod Antipas;

“and coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth,” where the wonderful occurrences attending our Lord’s birth were not generally known. “That it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets, *that he shall be called a Nazarite.*” Such in fact was our blessed Saviour both as to the name and meaning of it; for the word *Nazarite*, or Nazarene, signifies one separated from the world and consecrated to God. Wherefore Christ was deservedly called so, as well for taking up his residence at Nazareth, as for fulfilling the signification of this name by a total separation from all earthly impurities, and by a perfect consecration of himself to God.

CHAPTER XII.

JESUS IS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE IN THE MIDST OF THE
DOCTORS. LUKE II. 40—52.

“AND the child” Jesus “grew, and was strengthened full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in him.” Not that there was any real increase in those supereminent gifts which from the first moment he possessed in the fullest measure; but they were manifested outwardly more and more as the increase of his age and new circumstances seemed to call for their exertion. Of this St. Luke has left us a memorable example in the following account.

“And his parents,” according to the injunction of the law, “went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the passover,” to adore God in his temple, and make their offering. “And when he was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast,” took him with them, probably for the first time; for he could not perhaps, at an earlier age, have performed so long a journey, it being above eighty miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem. “The days being now ended, when they were returning, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents knew it not.

And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and " at night " sought him among their kindred and acquaintance ; and not finding him as they expected, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him " with heavy hearts, as being uncertain what accident might have befallen him. Not that their feelings on this occasion argued any disbelief of his divinity ; but as they knew that during the whole time of his infancy, he had been pleased to submit to all the infirmities of that tender age, so they were carried away by a natural tenderness on this occasion, being unable to conceive for what possible reason he should thus absent himself from them. " And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers : and seeing him, they wondered " to find him thus placed in so honourable a station among the doctors of the law. " And his mother said to him : Son, why hast thou done so to us ? Behold thy Father and I, with grief, were seeking thee. And he said to them : How is it that you sought me ? did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business ? " insinuating that not St. Joseph, but only God, was his Father. These are the first words which the Evangelists specify to have been spoken by Jesus, and they contain an important lesson for our instruction, which is that of being ever employed about the business of our heavenly Father. " And they understood not his word that he spoke unto them," *i. e.* as to the time when, or the manner how, he intended to manifest himself to the world. However, such was their profound reverence and respect for him, that they asked no further explanation. And having thus established his independence in what related to his sacred ministry, " he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them," paying them all filial attention, deference, and submission. Astonishing example of humility and obedience, which is justly proposed to the imitation of

youth, and of all Christians. "Who," says St. Bernard, "was subject? God: to whom? to men. He whom the powers of heaven obey, was subject to Mary: learn therefore, men to obey, learn, O earth, to be subject, and thou, O dust, learn to submit." "And his mother laid up all these things in her heart," that she might nourish her piety by an uninterrupted meditation of them, might regulate her life conformably to them, and afterwards be enabled to communicate them to others, when in due time they were to be announced throughout the world, by the tongues of the Apostles and the pens of the Evangelists. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and man," although, in fact, he were, from the first moment of his conception, equally replenished with wisdom and grace in the sublimest degree, and in the most permanent manner; as the sun, though always equally luminous in itself, diffuses more and more the rays of its brightness in proportion as it advances in its midday course.—Such ought also to be our spiritual course: as we advance in age, we should advance in virtue; and though we cannot attain to the summit of perfection, we should at least aspire to it, since the measure of our recompense in the next life will be proportioned to that degree of merit which we shall have obtained in this.

This is all that is to be found in scripture concerning Jesus Christ, from the time of his returning out of Egypt till his baptism, when he was about thirty years of age. In addition to which it may be affirmed, that he did not apply himself to letters; and as his father and mother were obliged by their poverty to continual labour, for the sake of gaining a subsistence, we cannot doubt but that Jesus worked along with them in testimony of his humble obedience and subjection. The business which he and his reputed father followed, was that of a carpenter, since the Jews called him by this name; and he probably wrought both in iron and wood, agreeably to what St. Justin says of him, "that he made ploughs and yokes for oxen." Certain it is that the holy family, Jesus,

Mary, and Joseph, living in their poor cottage, exhibit to us the most perfect model of heavenly conversation upon earth. How great must have been the happiness of Mary and Joseph in thus enjoying the presence of Jesus ; always burning with the most ardent love for him ; inviolably attached to his sacred person, and always employed in his service !

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE DESERT. MATT. III. 1—12.

MARK I. 1—8. LUKE III. 1—8.

“Now,” when Jesus was leading an obscure life at Nazareth, “in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea” for the Romans, “and Herod” Antipas “being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina. Under the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, the word of the Lord was made unto John the Son of Zachary in the desert,” where he had retired. Wherefore we may here date “the beginning of the Gospel,” or good news, “of Jesus Christ the Son of God, as it is written in Isaias the prophet: Behold I send my angel before thy face,” *i. e.* before thou enter upon thy public ministry, “who shall prepare the way before thee.” The detail of the actions of the holy Precursor may be reduced to five different heads: 1. His employment, viz. his preaching and baptising. 2. The austerity of his life. 3. The effect or fruits produced by his preaching. 4. The particular advice given by him to each state and condition of life. 5. The testimony borne by him repeatedly in favour of Jesus Christ.

“In those days came John Baptist into all the country about Jordan, in the desert of Judea, baptising and preaching the baptism of penance unto the remission of sins. And saying: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

This baptism of John represented the manner in which the souls of men must be cleansed from all sin and vicious habits, to be made partakers of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and it was an emblem of the interior effects of sincere repentance. The Jews practised several religious washings of the body as legal purifications, but none of these had so great and so mystical a signification as the baptism of John. It differed however entirely from the great sacrament of baptism, which Christ soon after instituted, to which it was much inferior in virtue and efficacy, and of which it was a kind of type. Whence this baptism of John is called by the Fathers a kind of partition between the law and the gospel; it prepared men to become Christians, but it did not make them so. It was not even conferred in the name of Christ, or in that of the Holy Ghost, who had not been as yet given (John vii. 39).

By the means of St. John's preaching penance, God prepares the Jews for the kingdom of heaven, which was now approaching; not an earthly kingdom, such as they had figured to themselves on the coming of the Messias, but that inward and spiritual reign, which begins here on earth by faith showing itself by charity and good works, and which will attain its utmost completion in heaven by the perfection of charity. The character of a preacher is properly applicable to St. John Baptist, as the Evangelist shows: "for this is he," says St. Matthew, "who was spoken of in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet, *a voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths;*" that is, correct every vicious disposition of your hearts that may disqualify you for the coming of Christ. Many of the Jews were in a desponding way, and had given up all thoughts of his coming; others presuming upon their good works were puffed up with pride and vanity, whilst the generality were guilty of hypocrisy, and under the cloak of an exterior piety, concealed the greatest corruption of heart: lastly, some who were in the right way, were not without

vicious attachments, which retarded their progress and advancement in virtue. But the prophet foretells by the mouth of St. John Baptist, that “every valley shall be filled ; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” That is, by the coming of the Saviour sent by God, these valleys of despondency and despair shall be filled up ; these mountains of pride and hills of vanity shall be levelled ; these crooked ways of hypocrisy shall, by a rectitude of intention, be rendered straight ; and lastly, these thorns shall be plucked up, and these clods of earth broken, viz. these anxious cares and solitudes for earthly goods shall yield to better employments, such as truly deserve our attention. It may be remarked, that these are the four great obstacles by which Christian piety is, to this day, retarded in its progress ; and from these Jesus Christ delivers those by his grace, who seek him in a proper manner.

The austerity of the life of the holy Precursor added weight to his preaching : for “John had his garment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins : and his food was” no other than what he found in the desert, viz., “locusts,” a kind of large grasshoppers, “and wild honey,” such as abounded in Judea, and was to be met with in hollow trees and in the cavities of rocks, a species of food equally poor and insipid, and such as was then the sustenance of the most indigent classes of mankind. This rigid mode of life was consonant with the designs of Providence, and every way suitable to the calling of St. John. 1. He who preaches penance, ought to set the example of it to his hearers, thus to convince them of its necessity ; whereas the Pharisees were ever ready to load sinners with the heaviest burthens, whilst they themselves refused to bear the smallest share. 2. It was necessary that he who was to declare himself openly in favour of Jesus Christ, and to gain him many disciples, should render his testimony perfectly unex-

ceptionable: by his sanctity, by his disinterestedness, and by a love of solitude.

The fame of John's mission was no sooner spread abroad, than "there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and all the country about the Jordan, and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." The advice which he gave varied according to the different principles of his hearers, and was suited to their several states and conditions of life. There were amongst the Jews, long before the birth of Jesus Christ, three distinct sects. 1. The Essenians, whose faith and morals were of all the most irreproachable. 2. The Pharisees, whose institution was in its commencement laudable, but which had degenerated into an uniform system of hypocrisy. They were noted dissemblers, avaricious, full of ambition, jealous of rank and precedence, seekers of honour and esteem almost to a degree of idolatry; and whilst they distinguished themselves by an exterior sanctity, calculated to deceive the vulgar, they were defiled with all kinds of secret crimes. 3. The Sadducees, who, as some think, derived this name from Sadock, who lived 300 years before Christ, were professed unbelievers with respect to spiritual beings, such as the angels and devils, and likewise with regard to the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; and their morals were undoubtedly conformable to so profane a creed.

"And" St. John "seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: Brood of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath that is to come? Bring forth therefore worthy fruits of penance. And say not within yourselves: we have Abraham for our father; for I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," in order to the accomplishment of the promises he made to this patriarch; and therefore you are not to imagine that, on this account, he will be prevented from punishing you. "For now the axe is laid to

the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit," by true faith and repentance, "shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." And the people, moved with his preaching, "asked him, saying: What then shall we do? He answering said to them:" that they were to give alms out of their superfluity: "thus," says he, "he that hath two coats, let him give to him who hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner" *i. e.* impart a share thereof to those in want. Under these acts of mercy, all other similar ones are of course comprised. "And the publicans," who were the collectors of taxes, "also came to be baptised, and said to him: Master, what shall we do" to be saved? "But he said to them, exact nothing more than that which is appointed you" by public authority. "And the soldiers also asked him, saying: and what shall we do? And he said to them: do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay."

"And as the people was of opinion, and all were thinking in their hearts of John that perhaps he might be the Christ," who was then expected by all the nations of the East, "he answered," by candidly stating his own great inferiority, and that of his baptism, compared with the future baptism of the Messiah, "saying unto all: I indeed baptise you in water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry," nor "to stoop down and loose," *i. e.* to do for him the meanest office. "He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and the fire" of his divine love, in order to purify you from your sins.

St. John then describes the Messiah as the sovereign Judge of all mankind, under the figure or similitude of a labourer, "whose fan," says he, "is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." The winnowing fan which separates the corn from the chaff, represents to us the last judgment, when the elect will be

separated from the reprobate, though in this life they be indiscriminately mingled together. The barn floor is the Church of God, the granary is heaven, where the elect will be stored up as excellent grain: the unquenchable fire is the fire of hell, into which the reprobate as chaff will be precipitated, there to burn in eternal flames. These important subjects St. John urgently inculcated to his hearers, “and many other things exhorting did he preach,” which the Evangelists have not recorded.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS GENEALOGY ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE. MATT. III. 13—17; MARK I. 9—11; LUKE III. 21—38.

“AND it came to pass in those days,” *i. e.* towards the close of St. John’s mission, “when all the people was baptised, then Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, to the Jordan unto John, to be ” also “baptised by him.”

His design herein was, 1. To sanction the baptism of the holy Precursor by his own example, and to give his approbation to the practice of others who had received it. 2. Not to lose this occasion of humbling himself, by placing himself among sinners, as if he had been one of their number, and stood in need of the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. 3. It was to sanctify the waters, says St. Ambrose, *i. e.* to give them the virtue to cleanse away the sins of men in the laver of baptism. St. Austin and St. Thomas think that he instituted then the holy sacrament of baptism, which he soon after administered by his apostles, whom doubtless he had first baptised himself.

“But John,” who knew Jesus by a divine revelation, and was full of awe and respect for his sacred person, “was for hindering him, saying: I ought to be baptised by thee ” who

art holiness itself, "and comest thou to me" a sinful man. "And Jesus answering, said to him, suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice," *i. e.* to exercise and give examples of all virtues, amongst which humility is the foundation which sustains all the rest. "Then he permitted him, and" so Jesus "was baptised by John in the Jordan," on the 6th of January, according to the received testimony of the ancient fathers. "And being baptised forthwith he came out of the water, praying, and lo! the heavens were opened to him; and he saw the spirit of God descending in a bodily shape as a dove upon him, and remaining on him; and there came a voice from heaven saying: *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.*" According to St. Matthew the following words were likewise addressed to St. John and to all present: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

By this audible declaration, and by the whole of this awful scene, God acknowledged Jesus Christ for his own Son, in order thus to afford a public sanction to his sacred ministry. Investing him with the high office of Lord and Master of mankind, he thus gave a solemn approbation of all the doctrine which he was about to teach. Moreover, God thus pointed out, in a visible manner, the invisible effects of the baptism which Jesus Christ was about to institute. These were, that he adopted for his children such as were baptised; that the Holy Ghost descended into their souls, and that heaven was opened to them. Lastly, this wonderful scene afforded a clear demonstration of the truth of what Jesus was going to announce to mankind, *viz.* that from the time of John's mission, the gates of heaven, which had been hitherto shut, were now opened to them, and that the time was come when the possession of heaven was to be the reward of those who should employ violence to obtain it.

"And Jesus began" (Luke iii. 23), his sacred ministry "about the age of thirty years (being as it is supposed) the son of Joseph, who was of Heli, who was of Mathat, who

was of Levi, who was of Melchi, who was of Janne, who was of Joseph, who was of Mathathias, who was of Amos, who was of Nahum, who was of Hesli, who was of Nagge, who was of Mahath, who was of Mathathias, who was of Semei, who was of Joseph, who was of Juda, who was of Joanna, who was of Resa, who was of Zorobabel, who was of Salathiel, who was of Neri, who was of Melchi, who was of Addi, who was of Cosan, who was of Elmadan, who was of Her, who was of Jesu, who was of Eliezer, who was of Joram, who was of Mathat, who was of Levi, who was of Simeon, who was of Juda, who was of Joseph, who was of Jona, who was of Eliakim, who was of Melea, who was of Menna, who was of Mathatha, who was of Nathan, who was of David, who was of Jesse, who was of Obed, who was of Booz, who was of Salmon, who was of Naasson, who was of Aminadab, who was of Aram, who was of Esron, who was of Phares, who was of Juda, who was of Jacob, who was of Isaac, who was of Abraham, who was of Thare, who was of Nachor, who was of Sarug, who was of Ragau, who was of Phaleg, who was of Heber, who was of Sale, who was of Cainan, who was of Arphaxad, who was of Sem, who was of Noe, who was of Lamech, who was of Mathusale, who was of Henoch, who was of Jared, who was of Malaleel, who was of Cainan, who was of Henos, who was of Seth, who was of Adam, who was of God."

I shall not enter into all the difficulties of this genealogy, which is very different from that given us by St. Matthew, chap. i. St. Matthew, who wrote his gospel for the Jews, commences his genealogy of Jesus Christ with Abraham, and traces it through forty-two generations; on the contrary, St. Luke, who wrote it for the Gentiles, began by Jesus Christ himself, and ascending up to Adam, continues it through seventy-five generations. But whereas St. Matthew has given us the genealogy of St. Joseph, St. Luke seems to have written that of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hence Joseph is styled the son of Heli, by reason of Mary his wife. For

Heli by an abbreviation is put for Heliachim, which with the Hebrews is the same name as Joachim, the father of Mary ; whereas Joseph's father, according to St. Matthew, was called Jacob.—Others solve the difficulty in a different manner, and affirm that both the Evangelists trace the genealogy of Joseph, with this difference, that St. Matthew makes him descend from David by Salomon, and St. Luke by Nathan, another son whom he had by the same Bethsabee. According to them Matthew gives his natural, and St. Luke his legal pedigree. For Mathan, who descended from David by Salomon, had for his wife Estha, who was afterwards married to Melchi or Mathat descended from David by Nathan. Mathan had by her Jacob, Melchi had Heli ; wherefore Jacob and Heli were uterine brothers, *i. e.* had the same mother. Heli dying without children, Jacob, according to the law, espoused his widow, in order to raise up seed to his brother, and had by her Joseph, who was by nature his son, as St. Matthew relates ; but according to the law he was the son of Heli, as mentioned by St. Luke. This explanation is given us by Julius Africanus, who flourished in the beginning of the third century, in his epistles to Aristides, as may be seen in Eusebius, L. 1. of his Eccles. Hist. c. 7, which explanation was adopted by St. Jerome, and most of the ancient Fathers, as Baronius observes.

The former opinion, however, viz. that St. Luke gives us the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin, is more generally received by modern commentators ; and as to what St. Jerome tells us, that it was not customary with the Jews to write the genealogies of women, it may be answered, that on this very account, St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, and chiefly for the Jews, had reason to conform himself to their custom, whereas St. Luke, writing in Greek to the converted Gentiles, had a special reason for writing the pedigree of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus being truly her son, and not the son of Joseph.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FASTINGS AND TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST. MATT.
IV. 1—11. MARK I. 12, 13. LUKE IV. 1—13.

“AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and immediately the” divine “Spirit drove him into the desert,” between the Black Sea and Jericho, “to be tempted by the devil; and he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted by Satan, and he was with” wild “beasts.” The first motive for this total separation from the world, was in order to prepare himself for the great work which he was about to undertake, viz. that of preaching the kingdom of heaven, of establishing his Church, and of redeeming mankind. By this he teaches all those whom he was to call afterwards to the same ministry, that they should previously retire into solitude in order to converse with God in prayer, and draw down the blessing of heaven upon themselves and their undertaking. A second motive was, in some sort, to sanctify the desert, which, in future times, was to be the refuge of so many saints against the dangers of the world.—A third motive, according to St. Ambrose, was to afford an opportunity to the devil of attacking him by his temptations in consequence of his forlorn and abandoned state. “And he eat nothing in those” forty “days,” watching, praying, and fasting continually in this hideous wilderness, in order to atone for the intemperance of our first parents in Paradise. It is thus he instructs his followers, that fasting which weakens us, and prayer which elevates us to God, are the best arms which we can make use of against the temptations of the devil. From the example which Christ sets us of fasting, St. Jerome and St. Austin derive the institution of the solemn fast of Lent: and it is strange that Protestants should condemn an observance which is so agreeable to scripture, and to the practice of all

ages. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry," hereby evincing the reality of his human nature, which after being miraculously supported during so long a time, as Moses and Elias had been, was now permitted to feel hunger and thirst.

The weak and reduced state to which Jesus was brought by fasting, encouraged the devil to make his approaches and to tempt him three different ways; by which we are taught that the enemy of mankind attacks us only through our wants and weaknesses; or, in other words, through our natural or our inordinate inclinations.

"And the tempter," *i. e.* the devil, probably in some bodily shape, "coming, said to him: if thou art the Son of God," according to the recent testimony given thee at thy baptism, "command that these stones be made bread" for thy nourishment. This was a temptation of sensuality, and the devil was likewise desirous to know in what sense he had been called the Son of God by a voice from heaven. "And Jesus made" this "answer," full of humility and confidence in God, "it is written: Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God," *i. e.* he is supported by any other thing, or in any other manner, as it pleaseth God, and therefore it is not necessary to have recourse to the means here proposed. Christ teaches us, by his example, how to overcome those temptations that are founded on temporal necessities, viz. by putting our confidence and trust in divine providence.

"Then the devil took him up into the holy city of Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle" or balustrade "of the temple, and said to him: if thou be the Son of God," and hast so much confidence in his word, "cast thyself down; for it is written" (Psalm xc. 11), "that he hath given his angels charge of thee, that they preserve thee, and that they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone." This verse of the Psalter assures the just man of the protection of God in all such

dangers as are above the reach of human assistance, and when the hand of Providence alone can rescue him : but it by no means promises this protection in such dangers as are voluntarily brought upon us from an unjustifiable presumption. This is the crime which the scriptures call tempting God, and which they severely condemn. Accordingly, in opposition to this temptation of vain glory and pride, “Jesus said to him : It is written : thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God ” (Deut. vi. 16). As if Christ had said : I must not work miracles out of vanity or presumption, and since I may go from hence by the stairs, I have no reason to tempt God, nor to cast myself down headlong.

Baffled in his second assault, “again the devil tempted Jesus, and took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him,” as in a landscape, “all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time, and their glory, and said to him : all these I will give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me.” To thee will I give all this power and the glory of them, for they are delivered to me, and I give them to whom I will. If therefore thou wilt adore me, they shall be all thine.” This was the third temptation proposed to our Lord, which is that of cupidity, as it regards riches, honours, or any worldly goods. “Then Jesus saith to him : begone Satan,” and no longer tempt me with the allurements of riches, dignities, or honours. “For it is written : the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve.” And every temptation being ended, “the devil departed from him for a time,” viz. until the period of his passion, when by the hatred of the Pharisees and by the avarice and treachery of Judas, *he found means* to compass the death of him whom his artifices could not corrupt. Then it was that the ministers of Satan tempted him almost in the same way : “*If thou be the Son of God,*” said they, “*come down from the cross.*” “And behold the angels,” who had been spectators of the combat and of the victories of Jesus, “came ” now, “and ministered to him,” bringing

him such refreshments as were suitable to the exhausted state of his body.

The temptations which Jesus Christ was pleased to undergo in the wilderness, have been considered by his followers as a subject both of consolation and instruction. By example he has taught them how to fight against their spiritual enemies, and to conquer too. The struggle may be painful while it lasts, but heavenly comforts soon succeed. "Let us love retirement," say the holy fathers, "let us fast, and pray, and the devil cannot hurt us." With a lively faith let us meditate on the word of God, and it will furnish us with an impenetrable shield against the fiery darts of our enemy. Let us put our trust in Jesus Christ, the vanquisher of his enemies, and temptations will but serve to strengthen our virtues and increase our crown.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONIES OF ST. JOHN IN FAVOUR OF JESUS CHRIST. JOHN I. 15—34.

ON his return from the wilderness, Jesus passed some days upon the banks of the Jordan, thus affording to his holy precursor an opportunity of bearing testimony to him on several occasions. We have already seen one instance of it, and three others here present themselves.

The second was uttered aloud, so as to be heard at a distance, and probably before a numerous audience. For "John beareth witness of him, and crieth out, saying: this was he of whom I spake: he that shall come after me, is preferred before me, because he was before me," being from all eternity the Son of God, though born after me in time. "And" as he is the source and principle of all gifts and graces, therefore "of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace," *i. e.* in lieu of the exterior graces of the

old law, he has given us abundance of graces in the new law, to some one grace, to some another. "For the law was given by Moses," a mere man: "but grace and truth," signified by that law, "were brought by Jesus Christ," who is God and man. "No man hath seen God at any time," and therefore Moses did not see him as he is in himself, nor could make him known so perfectly as "the only begotten Son" of God, "who is," from all eternity, "in the bosom of the Father: *he*" it is who "hath declared him" to us.

"Now this is the third testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem, priest and Levites to him, to ask and examine him" juridically concerning his person, his employment, and his ministry. They had come to the resolution of instituting this inquiry, in consequence of the various and wonderful circumstances which, to their astonishment, were related concerning this holy personage. The holy precursor received them with the respect due to their rank, acknowledging in them the authority of those by whom they were commissioned. This prudent conduct tended to gain still greater sanction to his mission. They proposed to him four questions, three of which concerned him personally, the fourth regarded his ministry.

As the Jews lived in the expectation of the coming of the Messias, and of Elias his precursor, they asked him which of these two he was: "Who art thou?" said they. It does not appear that by this question they sought to ensnare him, or obtain a pretext for aspersing his character. Jesus Christ, speaking of this deputation (John v. 33), gives no unfavourable idea of the purity of their intentions. This question clearly tended to discover whether or not he were the Messias. John therefore left them not a moment in suspense, "and he confessed" in the most express terms, "and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ." True humility cannot bear the very mention of undue honour. In this sentiment St. John made the above declaration, and lest they might not have perfectly understood him, he

repeated it both affirmatively, by stating that he was a distinct person from the Messias, and negatively, by saying absolutely that he was *not* the Messias.

“And they asked him : what then ? art thou Elias ? and he said, I am not. Art thou a prophet ? and he answered no.” He was indeed Elias in spirit, being the harbinger of the Son of God, and in this sense he is called so by our Saviour (Matt. xi. 14). He was likewise a prophet eminently, and more than a prophet, it being his office not to foretel Christ at a distance, like other prophets, but to point him out now present among men. But because he was not Elias *in person*, nor a prophet in the strict sense of the word, as implying one who foretels things to come, hence he rejects these titles, and seems to forget his dignity in every other respect, except in that of discharging the obligations it lays upon him, and of humbling himself under the almighty and merciful hand of him who had chosen and exalted him by his grace.

The deputies of the Jews finding that they could hence gather nothing positive or satisfactory to report to the Sanhedrim, urged him to declare in clear terms who he really was. “They said therefore unto him : who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us ? What sayest thou of thyself ?” Being thus pressed to give an account of himself, “he said,” in a true spirit of humility : “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness : make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaias said.” How admirable is the humility here displayed by the Baptist ! He will not have men entertain the least regard for him ; but turn their attention entirely from himself, as unworthy to be named or thought of, and only bids them listen to the summons which God sent them by his mouth. A voice is no more than an empty sound : it is a mere nothing.

“And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him : why then dost thou baptise, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor a prophet ?

John answered them, saying: I baptise in water," in order to induce men to repentance; "but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. He it is that is come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." Having heard these words, they returned to Jerusalem to report to the great council the result of their inquiries. "These things were done in Bethania," otherwise called Bethabara, "beyond the Jordan where John was baptising."

"The next day John saw Jesus coming to him," probably about the time when the lamb was sacrificed in the temple, "and he said" to those near him: "behold the" true "Lamb of God: behold him who taketh away the sin of the world;" behold the only Victim that purify men from their sins, and reconcile them to God! "This is he of whom I said: after me there cometh a man who is preferred before me, because he was before me. And I knew him not" by his outward appearance, "but" only by revelation when he came to me to be baptised in the Jordan, and "that he might be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptising in water," and preparing all to receive him. "And John gave testimony, saying: I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and he remained upon him. And I knew him not: but he who sent me to baptise in water, said to me: he upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining upon him, he it is that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. I saw then" that he descended upon Jesus, "and" accordingly "I gave testimony that he is the Son of God," because no other than the Son of God can administer the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN I. 35—51.

THE fifth testimony given by St. John in favour of Jesus Christ was on the following day, and in the presence of two of his own disciples ; one of whom was Andrew the brother of Simon, who was afterwards named Peter. These various testimonies of the holy precursor were a first necessary to procure disciples for Jesus, who was yet unknown among the people.

“ The next day John was standing again there ” at the time of the evening sacrifice, “ and two of his disciples ; and beholding Jesus walking, he saith,” pointing to him : “ behold the Lamb of God,” behold him who alone is worthy of being immolated, who alone is capable of satisfying the divine justice for the sins of mankind. “ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus,” being desirous of a further acquaintance with a personage of whom their master had said such wonderful things. “ And Jesus turning and seeing them following him, saith to them : what seek you ? who said to him : Rabbi (which being interpreted is, Master), where dwellest thou ? He saith to them : come and see. They came and saw where he abode, and they staid with him that day : now it was about the tenth hour,” or four o’clock in the afternoon. It is the opinion of several Fathers, though not founded on the sacred text, that they spent with Christ the whole night following. “ O how happy a day, how happy a night did they pass ! ” cries out St. Austin ; “ who will tell us what things they then learned from the mouth of their Saviour ? Let us build a dwelling for him in our hearts, to which he may come, and where he may converse with us.” The joy and comfort, which these two felt in that conversation, are not to be expressed by words : by it they clearly learned that Jesus was the Messias

and the Redeemer of the world, and they resolved from that moment to follow him.

“ And Andrew the brother of Simon Peter was one of the two who had heard John ” concerning Christ, “ and who had followed him.” Hence he was the first of his disciples, and is styled by the Greeks the *protoclet* or first called. Desirous of imparting to others the infinite treasure which he had discovered, “ he findeth, first his brother Simon, and saith to him : we have found the Messiah (which being interpreted is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus looking upon him,” before either of the brothers had uttered a word, “ said ” to him : “ Thou art Simon the Son of Jona,” or John ; “ thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter,” *i. e.* a rock. Christ now begins to form his Church, and points out the foundation of it. “ Thou shalt be called Peter,” *i. e.* thou shalt be the immovable rock, on which I will build my church (Matt. xvi. 18).

The Evangelist keeps an exact journal of the various transactions during the seven or eight days after the return of Jesus from the banks of the Jordan, until the time when he wrought his first miracle. This he does, that we may see the prompt and manifest progress of the work of God, and the fruit of St. John Baptist's preparations. “ On the following day he would go forth into Galilee,” as far as Cana, a town situated at the distance of about ninety miles from Bethabara, where he then was. On his way thither, “ he findeth Philip : and Jesus saith to him : follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter ; ” which the Evangelist remarks, to insinuate to us that they were acquainted with one another, and communicated to each other their mutual happiness. In like manner “ Philip findeth Nathanael,” who was of Cana of Galilee, “ and saith to him : we have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth.” Philip here spoke of the birth of Jesus, according to the common opinion, and it is more than probable that at this

time he knew no otherwise. It is most likely, as before observed, that St. Joseph was deceased previous to the commencement of the ministry of Jesus. For as in his discourses he would frequently speak of his Father as of a person then in existence, the Jews would naturally have referred to Joseph, if living, what was meant by Jesus to be referred to his eternal Father; and this ambiguity would continually have taken place in discourses with the Jews, to their no small perplexity and embarrassment. In reality, the evangelical history makes no mention of Joseph during any part of our Saviour's mission. "And Nathanael," who was well versed in the scriptures, "said to Philip: can there be any good from Nazareth?" not thinking it consistent with the predictions of the prophets that the Messiah, who was to be the son of David, and to be born at Bethlehem, should come from Nazareth. "Philip answered him: come and see," not doubting but, upon his personal acquaintance with the Son of God, he would be as much convinced of the truth as he was himself. Nathanael complied; and when "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, he saith of him," in his hearing: "behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Nathanael saith to him: whence knowest thou me?" To convince Nathanael that he had received no knowledge of him through the means of Philip, "Jesus answered, and said to him: before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael," persuaded that God only, and no other, could have beheld him in this place, "answered him and said: Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Philip had described Jesus unto him as the son of Joseph, and at that period the Trinity of Persons in God had not yet been revealed to the generality of the Jews: it appears therefore that Nathanael meant only to describe Jesus as the adopted Son of God, and by an adoption of a superexcellent kind, and such as was suitable to the dignity of the Messias. The acknowledgment of the divine and natural filiation of Jesus



THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.

was reserved for St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 16), “Jesus,” congratulating with Nathanael for thus believing in him, “answered and said to him : because I said to thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest : greater things than these thou shalt see,” and more convincing proofs of his being the Messiah. “And he saith to him : amen, amen I say to you : you shall see the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

It does not appear from the Gospel at what time this promise was accomplished : St. Chrysostom thinks at Christ’s ascension ; others refer it to the day of judgment, or to some other occasion. If none of these be deemed satisfactory, it is sufficient to observe, that each particular circumstance of our Saviour’s life and actions has not been committed to writing by the sacred Evangelists.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRIST ASSISTS AT THE MARRIAGE-FEAST OF CANA.

JOHN II. 1—11.

“AND the third day” after the calling of Philip and Nathanael, “there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee : and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and his disciples to the marriage.” These disciples might be Philip and Nathanael, Peter and Andrew, and perhaps St. Matthias, Joseph Barsabas, and some few others who had followed our Lord from the time of his baptism by John (Acts i. 21). Our Blessed Saviour was pleased to assist at this marriage-feast, in order to sanctify, by his presence, the marriage state, of which he is the author and institutor, and on which depends the propagation of mankind. 2. To teach the guests by his example, and, perhaps, by his words, to rejoice with them that rejoiced, with a holy and modest joy in the Lord. “And the wine failing,”

most probably in consequence of the unexpected arrival of Jesus with his disciples, "the mother of Jesus saith to him : they have no wine." This was a modest suggestion to him on her part, that his known benevolence might remedy an inconvenience arising solely from the arrival of him and his company. As this request, coming from a mother, seemed to lay a command upon the son to grant what was here asked, an immediate compliance with it would perhaps have had too much the appearance of an earthly or human motive for the miracle which he was about to perform, "and," therefore, "Jesus saith to her : woman, what is " that "to me and to thee ? My hour is not yet come : " perhaps, says St. Chrysostom, because they were not yet sufficiently sensible that wine was wanting. Certain it is, that Jesus designed not this as any personal rebuke to his blameless mother, but merely as a lesson to his disciples, that in the functions of their ministry they ought to pay no regard to flesh and blood. "His mother" was far from considering the answer she received as a refusal ; but full of confidence in his benevolence, "saith to the waiters ; whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of purification among the Jews, containing each two or three measures." The measure was nearly thirteen quarts, and thus the contents of the whole might be between twenty-five and thirty gallons. "Jesus saith to them ; fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them, draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast, and they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the waiters knew who had drawn the waters), the chief steward called the bridegroom, and saith to him : every man at first setteth forth good wine : and when they have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This was the beginning of the " public " miracles of Jesus which he did in Cana of Galilee : and hereby he

manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him," *i. e.* their faith hitherto, perhaps, weak, and founded chiefly on the testimony of St. John, was now augmented and confirmed by seeing this divine miracle.

We may consider the above miraculous change made by our Lord of water into wine (which was his first miracle) as a prelude to another still more miraculous change, which he made at his last supper, and which he will continue to make by his ministers to the end of the world; I mean the change of bread and wine into his own body and blood. With this wonderful miracle he daily honours the wedding-feast of his own espousals with our souls, in order to communicate himself to us, and to unite us to himself. By the means of this communication he operates in us another no less wonderful change, by which he transforms us in a manner into himself. The corporal food we take is, by the means of our natural heat, daily changed into our flesh and blood; but this spiritual food, like the fire which changes all things into itself, is not changed into our substance, but changes and transforms our souls, as it were, into its own nature, to make them *one* with this bread of life: here by grace, hereafter by glory. Happy those Christians who prepare their hearts for Jesus their heavenly spouse, that he may come and dwell in them to effect this miraculous change, this blessed conversion.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESUS DRIVES THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.

THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY TO BE DESTROYED AND RAISED UP AGAIN. JOHN II. 13—22.

AFTER this he went down to Capharnaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they remained there not many days. And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem," where he was to commence the functions of his high ministry by a great number of miracles. This time was the more suitable for the purpose, as a large concourse of Jews usually assembled there upon this occasion, who would not fail, on their return, to spread far and near the news of the discovery of the Messias. Jesus being arrived at Jerusalem, began his mission by two different kinds of miracles, each of which afforded the strongest proofs of his divinity. The first of these was the effect of his great zeal for the glory of his heavenly Father, and was levelled against the profaners of the house of God; the second was owing to his tender compassion to the infirmities of mankind.

On his arrival at Jerusalem, he went straight to the holy place, and he found in the first court of "the temple them that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves," for the sacrifices, "and the changers of money sitting" at their desks, in order to facilitate the payments made between the various Jews coming from distant parts. It is extremely probable, that the priests allowed the traders to bring their several commodities into this court, in order to dispose of them to such persons as wished to offer sacrifice, and that by such

connivance they reaped no small pecuniary advantage. The zeal of Jesus was inflamed at the sight of this profanation, "and when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple: the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew." This was a miracle truly divine, and effected by the majestic display of the divinity shining in his countenance. "And to them that sold doves he said: take these things hence, and make not the house of my Father a house of traffic. And his disciples remembered that it was written," Ps. lxxvii. "the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up. The Jews therefore," greatly irritated at this conduct, "answered and said to him: what sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this temple," and I will do a miracle which will show by what authority I have acted, for "in three days I will raise it up again. The Jews then said: six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body," the true temple of the Divinity, which was to be raised up by a glorious resurrection; a greater miracle than would have been the rebuilding of the material temple in three days. "When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples," who were now equally in the dark as to this mysterious rebuilding of the temple, "remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said:" being thoroughly convinced that his rising from the dead on the third day was the accomplishment of the prophecy; and that both his resurrection and the prediction of it were confirmed by the scriptures.

The preceding history exhibits a signal proof of the zeal of Jesus for the glory of his Father, and is the first circumstance attending the commencement of his mission at Jerusalem. This was succeeded by numerous miracles which he wrought out of compassion for those who were sick. Of

these miracles neither St. John nor the other Evangelists have given us the detail. "Now when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing the miracles which he wrought. But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men," and saw clearly the inconstancy of their faith, and the evil disposition of their hearts, "and because he needed not that any should give testimony of man, for he knew what was in man." This penetrating knowledge he had of men's hearts and dispositions, did not allow him, on this occasion, to trust either his secrets or his person to them, nor to prolong his stay at Jerusalem, the time not being yet come when he was to die for the redemption of the world.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISCOURSE BETWEEN JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

JOHN III. 1—21.

"AND there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night." The principal reason of this cautious conduct was the apprehension of drawing upon himself the resentment of the Priests and Pharisees, who had conceived the bitterest hatred against Jesus for expelling the buyers and sellers out of the temple, though authorised by them in the illicit use of that sacred place. A further reason was the desire of saving his own reputation in the eyes of the public. He sought from Jesus an explanation of such points of doctrine as he had not perfectly understood: now, to be seen asking questions, and receiving explanations from so young a master, would have been too humiliating a trial for a person of his rank, and therefore he chose a time when no one could be privy to the consultation.

The subject of this interview between Jesus and Nicode-

mus relates to the first elements of the christian religion, which the latter wished to learn. He introduced the discourse, and addressing Jesus, "said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." Tell me therefore, I beseech thee, what I must do to be saved. "Jesus answered," by showing to Nicodemus the necessity of a second birth, "and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to him: how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again? Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee; unless a man be born again" by the baptism "of water and" by the grace of "the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Our first birth, by which our bodies are produced, is all carnal: for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh:" on the contrary, the second birth of man is all spiritual, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," since every production partakes of the qualities of that by which it is produced. "Wonder not that I said to thee, you must be born again." This is to be understood of that spiritual birth which alone can fit us for the kingdom of heaven. As to the manner of this spiritual birth, it is as hidden as the other operations of the Spirit of God. "The Spirit breatheth where he will, and thou hearest his voice" from the mouth of his ministers; "but thou knowest not whence he cometh, and whither he goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The effects produced in him by the holy Spirit plainly show a great change in him, and he himself perceives it; but these operations of the Spirit are not perceptible to others: they see not the inward principle that makes him act, nor the end to which he tends, nor the goods which are the object, of his hope.

"Nicodemus answered and said to him: how can these things be done? Jesus answered and said to him: art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things," so clearly

signified by the law ; the perfection of which consists in the interior renewing of the soul by the grace of the Holy Ghost? Amen, amen I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things" by having recourse to corporeal images, "and you believe not ; how will you believe if I speak to you heavenly things," and in a language suited to their sublime and celestial nature? In other words, if you understand not when I speak of baptism given by water in a visible manner, how will you comprehend greater mysteries, such as my descent from heaven, and my abode still there? And yet no other person can inform you of these heavenly things ; for "no man hath ascended into heaven," to learn them, "but he that descended from heaven," *i. e.* "the Son of man, who" being likewise the Son of God, "is" always "in heaven. And" yet as great as the Son of Man is, he must die for the sins of men ; for, "as Moses lifted up the" brazen "serpent in the desert," that they who were bitten by the fiery serpents might behold it, and so be cured, "so must the Son of Man be lifted up," and fastened to the cross, "that whosoever believeth in him," by a faith working by charity, "may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son" to be immolated on the cross, "that whoever believeth in him," as the victim of propitiation for sin, "may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge" and condemn "the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him" with a lively, active faith, "is not judged ; but he that doth not believe, is already judged" and condemned, by being obstinate in his incredulity, and retrenching himself from the society of Christ and his church. "And this is the judgment," or cause of his condemnation, "because the light is come into the world" to teach the ways of justice and salvation, "and" yet "men loved darkness rather than light ; for

their works were evil." They were necessarily to make their choice between the pursuit of their former corrupt ways and the light which condemned them; but, being attached both by affection and habit to sin, they had not the resolution to break their chains, and to follow the light thus held out to them; and by thus giving the preference to their state of darkness, they have become even more obdurate in evil than before, with a more determined hatred of that truth which censured their conduct. "For every one that doth evil, hateth the light" which exposes his crimes, "and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved." Nothing is therefore more equitable than this judgment of the Almighty against mankind; they may avoid it by the means placed within their power; which, if they refuse, they can in reason blame none but themselves. "But," on the contrary, "he that doth truth," *i. e.* what truth and justice prescribe, "cometh to the light;" and so far from flying it, he examines daily all his actions by the bright light of the christian faith, "because they are done in God," and are ever conformable to his holy law.

It appears from this text, that among the many Jews who heard the several discourses of Jesus Christ, those only in general believed in him who were persons of good morals, such as Nicodemus in the present instance: I say, generally speaking, because there were, doubtless, many exceptions. Nicodemus was sincere in his search after truth; he found it, and embraced it. A fear of what the world would say made him ashamed at first of appearing in the company of Jesus Christ by day; he came therefore to consult him by night. However, he had the courage afterwards not only to declare himself publicly, but also to plead for his divine Master before the council, and to express his disapprobation of the bloody sentence which condemned him to the cross. Nor did he relent either in his courage or in his love for Jesus after the ignominy of his passion; he assisted Joseph of Arimathea in taking down the sacred body from the

cross ; he helped to embalm and lay it in the sepulchre. From these progressive steps, which Nicodemus made in the way of virtue, the holy Fathers take occasion to say, that we are not immediately to despair of those timid souls who dare not at first to declare themselves in favour of the truth. Great allowances must be made for human weakness ; we must know how to counsel the doubtful, and commiserate the feeble. Reflection, perchance, may dissipate their fears, and give them courage : in secret silence they may consider the eternal truths, the grace of God may at the same time work within their souls and inspire them with fortitude, so that they no longer fear or blush to show themselves in the cause of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SIXTH TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN FAVOUR OF
JESUS CHRIST. JOHN III. 22—36.

“ AFTER these things ” were done at Jerusalem, “ Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea,” not far from the place where John was staying, “ and there he abode with them ; and ” by them “ baptised ” all such as resorted to him for that purpose. It is extremely uncertain under what form of words he and his disciples conferred baptism, at a time when the mystery of the Trinity was not expressly revealed. “ And John also was baptising in Ennon near Salem, because there was much water there,” which shows that he baptised by immersion ; “ and they came and were baptised. For John was not as yet cast into prison.” The Evangelist makes this remark, because, as the other three Evangelists had omitted in their Gospels to mention the particular actions of Jesus, between the time of his fasting in the desert and the imprisonment of his precursor, St. John’s recital of the many transactions of Jesus in Judea

during that interval might otherwise have appeared contradictory to their narrative. This imprisonment of the holy precursor was the conclusion of his mission. Until that event he had continued without interruption to baptise, although Jesus was likewise baptising : but his object was solely that of gaining to his divine Master, not only those who had hitherto ranked amongst his own disciples, but also such others as might be induced to listen to his exhortations.

“ And there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews ” who followed Jesus, “ concerning the purification ” or baptism of Christ, and that of St. John, which of the two was the better. The Jews gave the preference to the baptism of Jesus, and the disciples of John to that of their master. “ And they came to John, and said to him : Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptiseth, and all men come to him.” This statement plainly implied a wish on their part that John would declare his sentiments ; and although they did not openly express this, he so far understood their meaning as to see clearly that they sought to extort from him a condemnation of the baptism of Jesus, with a censure as well of the person conferring it, as of those who received it at his hands. Almighty God permitted this dispute and this kind of jealousy in the disciples of St. John, in order to give him an occasion of delivering the following excellent instruction. Wherefore “ John answered, and said : A man cannot receive anything unless it be given him from heaven,” and therefore you may presume that it is God alone who gives him this great number of disciples. The death of self-love and of our own exaltation is implied in this admirable rule which he here lays down as the foundation of what he had to observe.

“ You yourselves do bear witness, that I said : I am not the Christ ; but that I am sent before him ” to dispose men in his favour : I ought therefore to rejoice that all go to

him. For “he that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom who standeth near and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom’s voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled,” by the glory of his miracles, the splendour of his name, and the wonderful things reported of him. St. John here describes Jesus Christ under a new character, the most tender and affectionate of all, viz. that of the Bridegroom. In effect, by his incarnation he espoused our human nature, which was totally foreign to him, and has made it one with himself :—he has espoused his holy Church, as an immortal Spouse that has neither spot nor wrinkle :—he has espoused to himself holy souls, whom he loads with gifts in the enjoyment of chaste delights : and prepares for them hereafter an union incomparably greater and more divine. Such is the character of Jesus Christ given us by St. John ; he is a Bridegroom ever tender and affectionate, who shows his love by unheard-of effects. And what is the character of John ? He is the friend of the Bridegroom who hears his voice with joy ; *i. e.* not merely his words, but also his wide-spreading fame, the account of his many miracles and preaching, and the universal astonishment of all who had heard of his extraordinary actions. Such ought to be the joy of every Christian in hearing the voice of Jesus ; for this voice we may still hear in his gospel ; and interiorly at the bottom of our heart by those graces and inspirations which he communicates to our souls.

But let us listen to St. John, who thus continued his discourse in favour of this beloved Bridegroom : “He must increase,” and rise more and more in eminence, not as to his person, for he is as great and eminent as he ever can be ; but by the glory of his miracles, by the concourse of his disciples, by the extent of his fame, by the conversion of nations to his faith, and by the display of that omnipotence which heaven and earth obey : “but I,” on the contrary, “must decrease,” and return into the obscurity of my

nothingness. "He that cometh from above is above all," and consequently infinitely above me. "He that is of the earth" as I am, "of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh," *i. e.* he is earthly in his nature, in his various qualities, in his habits of thinking, in his mode of reasoning and expressing himself. "He that cometh from heaven," as does Jesus Christ, he "is above all. And what he hath seen and heard" in heaven "that he testifieth, and" yet "no man," comparatively speaking, "receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath attested by his seal that God is true," and hath executed his promises concerning the Messias. "For he whom God hath sent" upon earth in the person of Jesus, "speaketh the words of God: for God doth not give" to him "the spirit by measure," as formerly to the prophets; but he communicates to him the whole fulness thereof as to his own Son: for "the Father loveth the Son" with an infinite love. "And he hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting" in hope, though not in possession; but he that believeth not the Son, and is incredulous to his doctrine, or disobedient to his precepts, "shall not see life everlasting, but the wrath of God abideth on him." This is the last of the several testimonies which John gave in favour of Jesus Christ, subsequent to which we place his imprisonment, an event which caused Jesus to quit Judea, and to retire into Galilee.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE IMPRISONMENT OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. MATT. XIV.
3—5. MARK VI. 16—29. LUKE III. 19, 20.

JOHN the Baptist had filled all Judea with admiration at the holiness of his life and doctrine: but "Herod the tetrarch, when he was reproved by him on account of" his living in

the state of adultery with "Herodias; his brother Philip's wife, and of all the evil things which Herod did, also added this to all the rest, that he sent and apprehended John and bound him, and put him into prison" in the fortress of Macherus, two leagues beyond the lake Asphaltites upon the borders of Arabia Petrea, as Josephus informs us. Herod thus persecuted the servants of God, not merely on his own account, but chiefly for "the sake of Herodias." But "John," with an intrepid zeal, "said to Herod: it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Levit. xvi. 18). "And when he would have put him to death, he feared the people, because they esteemed him as a prophet. Now Herodias laid snares for him: and was" very "desirous to put him to death, and could not" at this time succeed in her sanguinary purpose. "For Herod," though exasperated at his censures, yet "feared John, knowing him to be a just and a holy man: and he kept him" out of respect, "and having heard him, did many things" by his advice "and gave ear to him willingly." We are therefore to consider the tyrant as agitated by sentiments of the most opposite nature; sometimes respecting John as a saint, at other times hating him as a censor: so that he found a violent struggle in his own breast, between his veneration for the sanctity of the prophet and the reproaches of his own conduct; to which must be added the clamours and artifices of Herodias, who left nothing unattempted to take away the life of him who dared to impeach her conduct, and disturb her criminal pleasures and ambition.

It is by this easy interpretation that the apparent contradiction of St. Matthew and St. Mark, respecting the different dispositions of Herod, may be easily reconciled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JESUS LEAVES JUDEA.—HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE
SAMARITAN WOMAN. JOHN IV. 1—42.

“WHEN Jesus therefore understood that John was delivered up” by the command of Herod, he determined to enter more publicly on his sacred mission: for what he had occasionally hitherto done in Judea seems to have been rather a prelude to prepare the minds of men to receive him, when he should formally undertake the great office of the promised Messiah. Wherefore being about to occupy the place of his forerunner St. John, he chose Galilee for the first scene of his mission, that being the place assigned him by the ancient prophets.

A second reason mentioned by St. John for his retiring into Galilee, was a motive of consummate prudence; for he was well aware of the jealousy of the Pharisees, who “had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptiseth more than John (though Jesus himself did not baptise, but his disciples,” whom he commissioned to perform that sacred rite, whilst he himself was entirely employed in preaching), wherefore “he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.” In order to remove from the eyes of the jealous Pharisees a sight so disagreeable to their feelings, as was that of the rapid progress of his doctrine, and the increasing number of his followers; a sight which, in the ordinary course of things, would otherwise have brought down upon him their steady vengeance, before the time ordained by Providence for the final period of his mission.

“And” in his way to Galilee, “he was of necessity to pass through Samaria. He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria which is called Sichar, near the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph,” at the distance of thirty-six miles from Jerusalem, and the same place as Sichem, mentioned in Genesis xxxiv. “Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his

journey, sat just by the well. It was about the sixth hour," which answers to mid-day. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink (for his disciples were gone into the city to buy food "). But in making this request, his true motive was to introduce the following conversation with her, which he designed for the good of her soul. "Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask me to drink who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." By this gift of living water we are to understand the Holy Ghost, who quenches in our souls the thirst of sensual pleasure and of perishable goods, extinguishes the burnings of concupiscence, waters the dryness of the heart by sentiments of piety, and renders the soul fruitful in all kind of good works. This is truly a living water, both in itself and its effects, since the Holy Ghost being life, gives life to all such souls as are so happy as to receive him. "The woman," understanding him literally of the water that was in the well, "saith to him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our Father Jacob who gave us the well, and he drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle. Jesus answered, and said to her," that the water he spoke of differed from other waters, and was infinitely more excellent: "Whosoever drinketh of this " common "water," says he, "shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water which I shall give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting."

Thus it is with all the goods of this world, of which the waters we drink are an emblem or figure. They more properly excite in us fresh desires, which are the thirst of the

soul, than satiate us, since the satisfaction they bring us is only momentary. On the contrary, he who drinks of the water which Jesus offers, will never more suffer thirst. For the effusion of the Holy Ghost, in which consists the justice of this life, is the commencement of that justice and perfection which in heaven will diffuse glory on the blessed, and abundantly satisfy all their desires. And thus the water which Jesus is willing to bestow is of that nature, as to become in him who drinks of it a fountain or spring of living water which will never cease to flow, and which according to the nature of all water, rising up to the level of its source, will spring up to eternal life, whence it draws its origin. Now how can they be thirsty who carry in their bosom a never-ceasing spring of living water ?

“The woman,” beginning now to understand that Jesus was speaking of a water far more excellent than such as we are accustomed to, “saith to him : Give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus,” judging it unnecessary to add any further explanation upon the subject she was not yet capable of understanding, “saith to her : Go, call thy husband and come hither.” And this he said with the view of rebuking her for her wicked course of life, and of bringing her to repentance, which was a necessary condition for her receiving that divine water of grace of which he had been speaking. “The woman answered and said : I have no husband,” which was truly said : for the man who had her was either the husband of another woman or lived with her in concubinage, though vulgarly reputed to be her husband. Hence Jesus replied : “thou hast said well : I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : this thou hast said truly. The woman said to him : Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet,” for he had discovered to her such circumstances of her past and present life as a stranger must naturally have been ignorant of. However without taking offence at what Jesus had told her, she wished to profit of

the present opportunity, and proposed to him as a prophet a question which at that time was a subject of great dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. It regarded the right place of offering sacrifice. "Our fathers," said she, "adored on this mountain: but you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore." She speaks of offering sacrifice; for simple or mere adoration was never restrained to any particular place: her arguments tended to show that, as Abraham, Jacob, and the ancient Patriarchs adored God on mount Garizim, which she pointed to, near Sichar, and upon which the Samaritans had recently rebuilt the temple formerly erected by Manasses, and lately destroyed by John Hyrcanus, so it was unreasonable and unjustifiable in the Jews to pretend, contrary to the example and authority of their forefathers, that the only place where sacrifice was to be offered was within the walls of Jerusalem.

It was agreed upon by each party, that sacrifice should only be offered up in that place which the Lord had chosen, as prescribed in Deut. xii. 14, 16. But the difficulty consisted in ascertaining which of the two temples, viz. of Jerusalem or of Garizim, had been the object of God's choice. It is however incontestably true, that he had chosen the temple of Jerusalem, 3 Kings ix. 3; 2 Paralip. xvii. 12. But the Samaritans admitted not this authority, having rejected all the books of the Scripture except the Pentateuch of Moses. "Jesus" condescended to rectify what the woman had erroneously inferred, and "saith to her: Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem" only "adore the Father." In the meantime, "you," Samaritans, "adore that which you know not," having by your superstitions corrupted the true worship of God; but "we Jews adore that which we know," viz. the only true God, and in such a manner as he himself prescribed by his servant Moses. "For salvation is of the Jews," the true Messias being promised to them. "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers," *i. e.* Chris-

tians, "shall adore the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to adore him. God is a spirit, and they who adore him must adore in spirit and in truth," without being confined to any one temple or place; and chiefly in *spirit*, without such a multitude of sacrifices and ceremonies as the Jews practised.

This adoration in spirit may be understood as referring to that spiritual adoration which, both in its object and concomitant circumstances, is peculiar to the new law, in opposition to the old law of Moses, which was carnal in its sacrifices, its ceremonies, its precepts, and its promises. We may likewise consider it as put equally in opposition to those shadows and figures, which constituted the essential part of the old law, as well as to the superstitious errors which prevailed in the worship of the Samaritans. Or, perhaps, this *adoration in spirit and truth*, may be considered as merely signifying that sincerity wherewith a soul adores her God with all her heart, without hypocrisy and disguise.

"The" Samaritan "woman," not understanding this sublime theological discourse of Jesus, "saith to him," suspecting him perhaps to be the Messias: "I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ), therefore when he is come he will tell us all things" necessary to be known by mankind. "Jesus saith to her: I am he who am speaking with thee: and presently his disciples came" with such provisions as they had procured, "and they wondered that he talked with the woman" contrary to his usual practice, "yet no one said what seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman therefore," now fully convinced of his being the Messias, "left her water-pots," with all haste, "and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there: Come and see a man who hath told me all things that ever I did. Is not he the Christ; They went therefore out of the city, and were coming to him. In the meantime," as Jesus did not seem disposed to partake in the provisions brought him, "the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi,

eat. But he saith to them: I have food to eat, which you know not," alluding to the conversion of the Samaritans, which he hungered and thirsted after more than his corporal food. "The disciples therefore," understanding him in a literal sense, "said one to another: hath any one brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them: my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work:" which was to procure the salvation of souls by such means as his Father had pointed out, and principally by his preaching and doctrine. He further exhorted his disciples to the same function, by stating to them, that a large field was now open to their zeal, and that therefore they were not to say, as was usual with the sluggish people, that there were four months between the seed time and the harvest. "Do you not say," said he, "there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh. Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are quite ready for the harvest," and at the same time he probably pointed at the adjacent country which was ready for the sickle, and an emblem or figure of the spiritual harvest of the numberless souls who were prepared to receive the faith; a specimen of whom they now beheld in the crowd of persons flocking to them out of Sichar.

He urged them to work earnestly in this harvest, by exhibiting to their view the recompense which they had to expect. For as the reaper is entitled to his wages, so would the reaper of souls be undoubtedly entitled to receive the reward of eternal life; to which should be added, the further recompense arising from the joy and satisfaction of gaining to God so many souls as would be converted by means of their preaching and apostolic labours. "And he that reapeth," says he, "receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true: that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth: I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour:

others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." He alludes to the ancient patriarchs and prophets, who had laboured with great earnestness to instil into mankind the first principles of faith, the knowledge of the true God, and the hope of the Messiah, who was to come, whilst his disciples, whom he now sent to baptise, did no more than reap, as it were, the crop of that land which had neither been tilled nor sown by them.

"Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: that he told me whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired him that he would stay there; and he abode there two days," preaching the gospel himself, whilst his disciples administered baptism. "And many more believed in him, because of his words. And they said to the woman: we now believe not for thy saying," but for personal conviction; for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS IN GALILEE, WHERE HE BEGINS TO PREACH. MATT. IV. 13, 17. MARK I. 14. LUKE IV. 14, 15. JOHN IV. 43—45.

"Now after two days" stay in Sichar, "he departed thence," and leaving the holy city Nazareth, where he had lived so many years, he made Capharnaum the chief place of his residence. "For Jesus himself gave testimony, that a prophet has no honour in his own country," because the people who knew his birth and education, are generally prone to envy him any superiority over them. Wherefore "Jesus came, and returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee" *i. e.* he made it appear by many evident and miraculous proofs, that the power and virtue of the Holy Ghost was

with him, and that he was the promised Messiah ; for hitherto he had been, as it were, concealed, and had not manifested that plenitude of power of which he was possessed. “ And when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him ” with great honour and joy, “ having seen all the things he had done at Jerusalem on the festival day, for they also went to the festival day,” as appointed by the law. “ From that time Jesus began to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and to say,” as John his precursor had already done : “ the time is accomplished and the kingdom of God is at hand : do penance and believe the Gospel, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And the fame of him went out through the whole country ; and he taught in their synagogues, and was magnified by all.”

We are now to consider Jesus Christ as beginning to exercise the office of a divine instructor. And we may observe he did not, like other men, prepare himself beforehand for this office of teaching, nor would he learn anything from man, either by instruction or even by conversation and experience. For which reason he employed himself, till the age of thirty, in the humble capacity of a carpenter, in the obscure village of Nazareth. Hence men had reason to be amazed that he could speak so knowingly of what he had never learned. However, the Son of Man, destitute as he was of all instructions from men, immediately proposed to them what had never been proposed by any other man. He taught them a doctrine infinitely more elevated, more reasonable, and more coherent, than all that the philosophers had produced to the world. He spoke to them in a language so divine, so holy, so void of human passions, that it infinitely surpassed the ideas of men. He took the only way proper to make a reasonable impression on the multitude, which was to instruct them with authority, instead of persuading them by long abstruse reasonings ; but this authority he derived from certain and visible miracles. His moral lessons, therefore, are not supported by argumentation nor systema-

tically arranged, but are positive commands, comprised in a narrow compass, and suited to the capacity of mankind in general, and were delivered by him with a majesty becoming a heavenly messenger : wherefore considering the method he adopted for the conveyance of religious instruction to the world, we are forced to confess, that of all miracles which Jesus Christ performed in preaching the gospel, the gospel itself is the greatest, there being nothing more divine, more worthy of God, or more inimitable by men, than the sublimity, the holiness, and the simplicity of the gospel. The words of men proceeding from their limited understanding, are generally addressed to those only to whom they speak : but it is quite otherwise with regard to the words of Jesus Christ. He knew distinctly all those that would read them in after ages : he had them present in his mind. He addressed his words to them in the precise time wherein he foresaw that they would read and understand them : and thus he truly spoke to them. To hear Jesus Christ preach is still in our power : for when we read the gospel, he therein speaks to us, and addresses his words to us in a particular manner. How is it possible then that men should pay so little regard to what Jesus Christ hath spoken for them ? We listen with respect to what kings say, and think ourselves highly honoured when they vouchsafe to speak to us in particular. No one refuses to hearken to them, and yet we neglect to attend to Jesus Christ, when he speaks to us and instructs us in the words of his gospel.

CHAPTER XXV.

JESUS HEALS THE RULER'S SON WHO LAY SICK AT CAPHARNAUM. JOHN IV. 46—54.

JESUS “came again therefore,” after his return from Judea, “into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine,” the remembrance of which miracle was undoubtedly still fresh

in the minds of the people. He now wrought another miracle no less wonderful in behalf of one who was above fifty miles distant from him. The circumstances of this miracle, as related to us by St. John, point out in Regulus the different and imperfect degrees of his faith; this, however weak and wavering at first, became afterwards perfect and entire.

“And there was a certain Ruler” (literally Regulus), or person of distinction, “whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee,” and that he had wrought some extraordinary miracles, “went to him and prayed him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.” It appears that this Ruler had already some faith in Jesus, or he had not made application to him in this emergency; yet it extended no further than to consider him as a holy personage possessing the power of healing in desperate cases, by the imposition of his hands and by his prayers. Wherefore he deemed it necessary for him to be actually present to relieve the sick, and that if they died, his power in their regard was then at an end.

“Jesus therefore said to him,” rebuking him for the weakness of his faith: “unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not;” thus contrasting, as it were, the conduct of the incredulous Jews with that of the Samaritans, who had lately believed in him, without having witnessed any of his extraordinary miracles. We may observe how upon all occasions, our Lord directs his first care and attention to the *interior*, before he proceeds to display the external effects of his power. “The Ruler” considered this reproof of Jesus as a kind of refusal, at least as a delay; and fearful lest his son should die in the interval, “saith to him,” with still more earnestness: “Lord, come down before that my son die,” being fully prepossessed with the idea, that were he actually dead before the arrival of Jesus, there would then be no further hope. “Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son

liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him "as the word of a prophet, "and went his way;" and in this respect his faith was somewhat improved. Satisfied as to the fact, he however still continued in doubt as to the cause of his son's recovery, and to be convinced whether Jesus had himself performed the cure, or only announced to him what he saw in spirit to have been done, he refrained from forming a decided judgment until he should know the precise moment of his son's recovery. He therefore returned to Capharnaum, "and as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought him word, saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better, and they said to him: yesterday at the seventh hour [*i. e.* one o'clock in the afternoon] the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: thy son liveth." Conceiving that neither accident nor the common course of nature could have produced so exact a coincidence between two such very opposite circumstances, as the termination of a most violent fever, and the words pronounced by Jesus, who assured him of it, though at a distance of more than fifty miles; he reasonably concluded that the word of Jesus must have been the sole and immediate cause of his son's cure; his faith at once became perfect; "and he himself believed and his whole family." Hence he no longer considered Jesus merely as a holy person, or as a great prophet, but as the Messias, who had been for so many ages expected by the Jews, and who now, invested with the power of God, performed, at the greatest distance, such wonderful prodigies even by a single word.

"This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he came out of Judea into Galilee."

CHAPTER XXVI.

JESUS ENTERS CAPHARNAUM, AND CALLS PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN. MATT. IV. 13—22. MARK I. 16—21. LUKE IV. 31, AND V. 1—11.

“AND Jesus,” taking his departure from Cana, “went down, and came and dwelt in Capharnaum, on the sea-coast, a city of Galilee, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthali,” of very considerable extent, and much renowned for its wide extensive commerce, and for the affluence of its inhabitants. Jesus chose this city for his usual place of residence, as being the metropolis of Galilee, “that it might be fulfilled which was said by Isaias the prophet: the land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness hath seen great light: and a light is risen to them who sat in the region of the shadow of death.” In effect, the people of this country, hitherto involved in the dark mist of error and ignorance, and sitting as it were in the dark regions of sin and eternal death, now beheld a great light break forth among them, a God made man, who came purposely to enlighten them with the doctrine of eternal life.

The disciples whom Jesus had first called to the faith upon the banks of the Jordan, had likewise followed him into Galilee, and, without doubt, as far as Capharnaum: yet they were not wholly attached to him, and therefore returned again to their usual course of living, which was that of fishing. Jesus chose now to engage them entirely to his service, and in the recital given us by the Evangelists, we may observe, 1. Their vocation, not to the faith which they had already received, but to the apostolic school of Jesus. 2. An emblem or figure of the employment to which they were called. 3. The reasons they had to rely upon the providential care of Jesus in their behalf.

“Now Jesus, walking near the sea of Galilee, saw two

brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And going from thence a little further, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father mending their nets. And it came to pass, when the multitudes pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth, and saw " the said " two ships standing by the lake : but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going into one of the ships, which was Simon's, he desired him to put off a little from the land : and sitting he taught the multitudes out of the ship.

" Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him : Master, we have laboured all the night," which is the most favourable time for fishing, " and " yet " have taken nothing : but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying," with the most profound humility and reverence, " depart from me, for I am a sinful man. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon : Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men," not in order to their destruction, but that they may enjoy eternal life : " and he said " to Andrew, conjointly with his brother Simon, " follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men ; and presently leaving their nets they followed him." And forthwith he called the other two brothers James and John, " and they presently leaving their nets and their father in the ship with the hired

servants, and having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him," and became ever afterwards his constant attendants.

The pious reader may make different reflections on the foregoing narration. 1. He may consider the zeal and fervour of the pious multitude, who went in crowds to hear the word of God, and, by their example, may animate himself to the same holy practice. 2. From Christ's entering into Peter's ship preferably to the other, he may learn where he is to hear God's holy word and receive his faith and doctrine, viz. from Peter's chair, signified by the ship. 3. By this miraculous draught of fishes Christ gave his Apostles a type of their wonderful success in the new employment to which he called them, of being fishers of men. But we may observe, that previously to this wonderful success, they had laboured all night and caught nothing. In like manner Christians often labour much and to little purpose, because they labour by night, *i. e.* without the light of God's grace, being benighted by sin; or because they depend more on their own industry than on the divine help; or, lastly, because they labour for things which deserve not their care, which are not permanent, but vanish away like a shadow. This world may very fitly be compared to a sea, in which sinners and worldlings toil and labour all the night of their mortal lives and catch nothing. Their life is truly a dark tempestuous night; and when that is over, and the day of eternity begins to appear, then they will see that all their toils and labours have been fruitless; that they have laboured in vain, because they have not laboured for eternal goods. 4. We may likewise add, that this wonderful draught of fishes was a lesson to the disciples to place their confidence in Jesus, as to the relief of their temporal wants. By this specimen of his omnipotence, he would convince them that they might securely rely upon him or the care of their subsistence, whilst they dedicated themselves entirely to the preaching of the gospel: as they could

not fail of being abundantly provided for by him who, with a single word, could do whatever he pleased. A similar confidence should be our chief support amidst the difficulties and disappointments of this life: let us cast all our care on the Lord, from a firm conviction that he hath a care of us; and that if we seek above all things his kingdom and his justice, he will not fail to bless our endeavours, and to provide for us whatever shall be necessary in this our present state of probation and improvement.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JESUS PREACHES TO THE PEOPLE, AND DELIVERS A MAN POSSESSED WITH AN IMPURE SPIRIT. MATT. IV. 13—17.
MARK I. 21—27. LUKE IV. 31—36.

“AND forthwith,” after this miraculous draught of fishes, we behold Jesus “upon the Sabbath days, going into the synagogues” of Capharnaum with his disciples to perform the functions of his ministry. “Wherefore, the people being assembled as usual, he taught them” the words of eternal life: “and they were astonished at his doctrine, for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. And” now an occasion presented itself to Jesus for proving the truth of his doctrine not merely by words: “there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,” who having remained peaceable during the instructions given by Jesus, began, toward the conclusion of them, to disturb the auditory with a hideous yell. “And he cried out with a loud voice, saying: let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” The devil did not make this public confession through compulsion, and much less through flattery, but on the contrary, to chagrin

Jesus, who instead of outwardly proclaiming his divinity, chose it should be, for the present, concealed. This he did, lest the belief of his divinity being generally known, might prove an obstacle to his future sufferings and death. He would have the Jews to be convinced of his divinity chiefly by a natural consequence, which they might draw from his heavenly doctrine and his numerous miracles. And therefore "Jesus rebuked" the evil spirit on this occasion, "and threatened him, saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man: and the unclean spirit" used his utmost endeavours to maintain his hold, "tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice. And when the devil had thrown him into the midst, he went out of him, and hurt him not at all. And there came fear upon all;" for "they were struck with astonishment, so that they asked one another, saying: What meaneth this? what new doctrine is this? For with authority" and power, "he lays his commands on the unclean spirits, and they obey him, and" immediately "they go out" however reluctantly. "And the fame of him was spread forthwith over all the country of Galilee."

We may observe on this and other occasions, that one of the many striking circumstances in the history of Jesus, was the great authority that he assumed, and the dignified manner with which he uniformly spoke and acted, exceeding that of any prophet that had preceded him. Moreover, he invariably spoke in the tone of a lawgiver, who does not merely publish the will of others, but makes laws himself to regulate the whole duty of man. He expressed himself with a degree of majesty which commanded the veneration of all persons, with a grace which gained their affections, and with a force and efficacy which almost ensured their obedience. Moreover, he supported the truth of his doctrine by the most perfect propriety of conduct in every particular, and by the most wonderful miracles. The Jewish teachers were evidently inferior to him in all these respects: mere interpreters of the law of Moses, they went no further than

to explain its meaning by traditions of human invention, destitute of every merit, of elegance, of solidity, of perspicuity, and of religious unction.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CURE OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW. MATT. VIII. 14, 15.

MARK I. 29—31. LUKE IV. 38, 39.

AS Jesus commenced the first day of his public ministry by a display of his miraculous powers, so he was pleased to close it with similar proofs of his divinity. The Evangelists have entered into a minute detail of one of these miracles; the others they have related only in general terms.

“And immediately going out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.” From this verse it appears that these two brothers, although natives of Bethsaida, had settled at Capharnaum; probably for the greater convenience of exercising their trade of fishing, which was more productive there than at Bethsaida, and because Peter had married a person of that place. “And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick,” for she was “seized with a great fever, and forthwith they tell him of her, and entreated him in favour of her: and coming to her he lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and standing over her he commanded the fever to leave her, and immediately the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them;” for no length of time was necessary for the recovery of her strength, as is usual after a severe illness, and particularly with persons advanced in years.

“And when it was evening, after sun-set, they brought to him many that were possessed with the devil,” and “all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him. And all the city was assembled together at the door,” to

witness so extraordinary a sight. "But he laying his hands on every one of them, healed them; and he cast out many devils with his word, and all that were sick he healed. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying: he took our infirmities, and bore our diseases. And the devils went out from many, crying and saying: thou art the son of God; and rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ." The Pharisees afterwards attributed the expulsion of devils to a collusion between them and Jesus: but this calumny is here amply refuted beforehand, by the compulsory manner in which Jesus obliges them to give up the hold which they possessed, and to be silent concerning him. However, the accomplishment of the prophecies respecting Christ, and the plain and explicit testimony of the devils his enemies, were incontestable proofs that he was the Messiah promised in the law.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JESUS RETIRES INTO THE DESERT, AND AFTERWARDS PREACHES
IN GALILEE. MATT. IV. 23—25. MARK I. 35—39.
LUKE IV. 42—44.

JESUS here affords us an example, 1. Of prudence, teaching us to foresee such obstacles and impediments as we may have to encounter in the way of salvation. 2. Of a proper firmness in not allowing ourselves to be diverted from our religious purposes by any pretext whatever. 3. Of an unremitting application to all those duties which God requires of us in our respective situations in life.

On the following day, Jesus foreseeing that those who had been witnesses to his miracles would use every effort to detain him among them, thought proper to avoid their importunity; "and rising very early, went forth into a

desert place, and there he prayed," not on his own account, but to teach us what we ought to do, and to engage us, by his own practice, to a strict observance of our morning exercise. "And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and when they had found him, they said to him: All seek thee; and he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also, for to this purpose am I come" from Capernaum. "And the multitude sought him, and came unto him; and they stayed him that he should not depart from them," either out of apprehension that he intended to fix his residence elsewhere, or from their being struck with admiration of him, as not willingly to be separated from him, even for the shortest period of time. "To whom he said; to other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God; for to this end am I sent. And Jesus went about all Galilee," teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people, and casting out devils. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them."

Although the power of Jesus equally extended to all supernatural works, yet we may observe, that he gave a decided preference to such miracles as tended to relieve mankind from pain and sickness; omitting others which would merely have occasioned fear or excited curiosity in the spectators. Both these kinds of miracles indeed would have equally testified the truth of his doctrine, and have vouched for his omnipotence: but the former species of miracles more completely answered to his name of Jesus, which means the Saviour of mankind. 2. As the object of Christ's mission was to deliver souls from the tyranny of the devil, from the disorders of their passions, and from the death of their sins, so he acted more conformably with this

office, by expelling the devil from the bodies of them that were possessed, by healing such as were sick, and by raising the dead to life : for all these are expressive emblems or figures of the various diseased states of the soul of man. 3. The design of Christ's coming was to impart his graces to men at present, with a promise of their future glory and happiness : now the healing of their bodies was an earnest of the effect of grace in healing their souls ; the temporal benefits which he bestowed were pledges of eternal goods ; and this humane and beneficent line of conduct was better adapted to win the love and confidence of mankind than the most unheard-of prodigies.

CHAPTER XXX.

THREE MEN ARE REPROVED BY JESUS. MATT. VIII. 19—22.
LUKE IX. 57—62.

WHEN Jesus had ended his circuit about Galilee, he found himself near to the sea which takes its name from that country. "And seeing the great multitudes about him, he gave orders" to his disciples "to pass over the water," in order to disengage himself from their importunity. He had likewise in view the deliverance of two possessed persons, whom the devil tormented in an extraordinary manner. "And it came to pass as they walked in the way, a certain Scribe came and said to him : Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go." One of the disciples of Jesus made a similar offer of his service : and to these we add a third, in order that, in one view, may be seen the various rebukes given by Jesus to different persons, according to their respective and different dispositions. Of these persons the first here mentioned was the Scribe who had his mind filled with the ideas of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah : he therefore made a tender of his service, merely with a view to

his own aggrandizement in the world. But Jesus discovers his interested views, "and saith to him : the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head ;" hereby signifying the terms upon which he might be admitted among his followers, and the treatment he was to expect in his society. Upon this, the Doctor of the Law, as may be easily conjectured, retired immediately from his company, not a little disappointed in the expectations which he had conceived of improving his worldly fortune.

The second of these, according to St. Clement of Alexandria, was St. Philip, who was already in the number of Christ's disciples. Jesus willing to attach him still more to his service, "said to him : follow me. But he replied : Lord, let me first go and bury my father," just now dead. "But Jesus said to him : follow " thou " me, and let the dead bury their dead," *i. e.* let men of the world who are spiritually dead in sin, bury those who are dead both corporally and spiritually. By this answer we are taught that of two incompatible duties, we should always prefer that which is most essentially necessary,—and that which regards the glory of God and the salvation of souls, before that which is merely of a temporal nature.

Moreover, it is but reasonable to lay aside such duties as can be performed by others, when we are called to the performance of duties which individually belong to us, and to our state and calling.

"And another," viz. the third person, "said : I will follow thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house," and dispose of my effects. "Jesus said to him : no man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." If then you desire to gain admittance there, let not worldly cares engross your attention.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHRIST APPEASES A VIOLENT STORM. MATT. VIII. 23—27.

MARK IV. 35—41. LUKE VIII. 22—25.

“ON a certain day, when evening was come, he went into the boat, and his disciples followed him, and he said to them ; let us go over to the other side of the lake. And sending away the multitude,” they launched forth into the deep, “and there were other ships,” which accompanied and served to transport part of the crowd that had followed him.

In this passage across the sea of Galilee, we behold, first, in regard to the apostles, the weakness and timidity of human nature ; and secondly, the commanding power that Jesus exerted over the elements.

“And when they were sailing,” he slept, being extremely fatigued by his journey, and by continually preaching to the people. “And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, and there came down a ” prodigious “ storm of wind upon the lake, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the boat was covered ” with them, “ and was filled with water, and they were in ” immediate “ danger ” of sinking, “ and he was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow. And they came to him, and awaked him, saying : master, doth it not concern thee, that we perish. Lord save us, we perish.” Their minds were in the present moment, it seems, no less agitated by fear than the sea was agitated by the winds. “ And Jesus saith to them : Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith. Then rising up, he rebuked the wind and the rage of the water, and said to the sea : Peace, be still, and the wind ceased, and there was made a great calm. And ” again rebuking them for their want of confidence in his protection, he said to them : Why are you fearful ? Have you not faith ? Where is ” now “ your faith,” that faith which you flattered yourself was proof against all trials and difficulties ? “ And the men ” in the ship “ wondered, and feared exceedingly ; and

they said one to another : Who is this that commandeth the winds and the sea ? for they obey him ” as their Lord and master.

The holy Fathers explain this historical narration in an allegorical sense, and contemplate herein this busy agitated world under the figure of the sea ; under the figure of the vessel they view the Church, always tossed about and subject to severe trials permitted by the Almighty ; the sudden storm they consider as the figure of the persecutions of tyrants and wicked men ; in the sleep of Jesus, they view the patience and forbearance of God for a certain time ; in the cries of the alarmed disciples, the earnest prayers of the faithful ; in the awakening of Jesus, the succour afforded by him to his suffering Church ; and in the ensuing calm, the never-ending peace of a happy eternity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JESUS EXPELS A LEGION OF DEVILS, AND PERMITS A HERD OF SWINE TO BE PRECIPITATED INTO THE SEA. MATT. VIII. 28—34. MARK V. 1—18. LUKE VIII. 26—39.

WHEN the storm was now quelled, Jesus and his disciples having passed the night upon the sea “came” the next morning “over the strait of the sea into the country of the Gerasens,” which is situated in the tribe of Manasses, “and which is over against Galilee.” A remarkable instance was here displayed, 1. Of the implacable enmity which the devils bear to mankind. 2. Of the merciful protection of Jesus against their malicious efforts. 3. Of the black ingratitude of mankind towards Jesus.—The fury of the devils had expelled two men from all civil society ; the mercy of Jesus expelled these wicked spirits from this unjust possession ; and the ingratitude of the Gadarians expelled Jesus from their territories.

“And as he went out of the ship and came to land, there met him two” men “that were possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchres, exceeding fierce, so that none could pass that way. And behold,” one of them in particular, “a man with an unclean spirit, who was possessed now for a long time,” was to all a frightful object, “and he wore no clothes, neither did he abide in a house, but had his dwelling in the tombs,” which being out of the city, and built in the form of vaulted caverns, were a fit habitation for the unclean spirits that possessed him. “And no man could bind him, not even with chains : for having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him. And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” Thus there was never perhaps seen a more horrid object, nor one more deserving pity. He truly exhibited a lively representation of the cruel tyranny which the devils are permitted to exercise in this life over sinners, and of that which they will for ever exercise over them in the next world. “And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and fell down before him, and adored him,” acknowledging by this mark of respect the superior power of Jesus, against which he and his numberless associates could make no resistance. “And crying out with a loud voice, he said : what have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the most High God ? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time ? I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not. But he commanded the unclean spirit to go out of the man, and asked him, saying ; What is thy name ? But he said to him : my name is Legion, for we are many, because,” in effect, “many devils had entered into him. And he besought him much, that he would not drive him away out of the country, and command him to go into the abyss” of hell. It is to be remarked that the city of Gadara was yet immersed in idolatry, as appears from Josephus, and therefore the odour of its sacri-

fices offered to devils could not fail of being highly grateful to them.

“And there was not far from them, near the mountain, a great herd of swine feeding: and all the spirits besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them; saying, if thou cast us out hence, send us [*i. e.* permit us to go] into the herd of swine” there grazing, “that we may enter into them:” a most humiliating petition this on the part of those sublime spirits, who had heretofore aspired to the throne of God. “And Jesus immediately gave them leave,” that by abandoning these swine to the fury of the devils, he might show men the great favour he did them, in delivering them from the tyranny of these evil spirits. “And he said to them, go; and the unclean spirits going out entered into the swine, and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled, and” thus “they perished in the waters. Which when they that fed them saw done, they fled” in great haste, “and carried the news into the city, and into the fields and villages. And they told everything” in order to their own vindication, “as also concerning those who had been possessed with devils,” how their deliverance had been the true cause of the catastrophe. “And many went forth to see what was done, and they came to Jesus; and found the man, out of whom the devils had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And they, who had seen” it, “told them how it had been done to him that had the devil,” and “how he had been delivered from the legion,” and also “concerning the swine. And behold the whole city went out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him,” very ungrateful for the favour he had done to their distressed countrymen, they “besought him that he would depart from their coast, for they were taken with great fear;” apprehensive perhaps of yet further disasters either in their goods or in their persons. “And he going into a ship, returned back again,” having thus executed what had

been the object of his journey: "and when he went into the ship, he that had been troubled with the devil began to beseech him that he might remain with him. "And Jesus," considering his late condition as a kind of irregularity, "admitted him not" into the number of his disciples; "but said to him: Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them, how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and" how he hath had compassion on thee. And he," full of gratitude, "went through the whole city, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all persons admired" his wonderful narrative.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JESUS CURES A SICK MAN OF THE PALSY. MATT. IX. 1—8.

MARK II. 1—12. LUKE V. 18—26.

"AND when Jesus had repassed the water in the ship, a great multitude assembled together unto him, and received him" with joy, "for they were all waiting for him. And he again entered Capharnaum," which St. Matthew styles his own country, because he had chosen it for his more ordinary place of residence. "And it came to pass on a certain day, it being heard that he was in the house, many came together, so that there was no room, not even at the door, as he sat teaching; and the Pharisees and Doctors of the law were" also "sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and from Jerusalem," to hear and judge of his doctrine. "And he spoke to them the word of God, and the power of the Lord was for healing them" in the neighbourhood, who applied to him under their several maladies. On this occasion, the faith of a man afflicted with the palsy claims particularly our attention; for in recompense of this faith he received the forgiveness of his sins, as well as the perfect cure of his disorder.

"And behold some men brought a man who was ill of the

palsy, lying in a bed, carried by four, and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him : and when they could not find by what way they might bring him, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof," which, as usual in the East, was almost flat, and surrounded by a balustrade ; "and they uncovered the roof where he was, and opening it, through the tiles they let down the bed wherein the man sick of the palsy lay, into the midst before Jesus, who having seen their faith, said to " him : " be of good courage, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And there were some of the Scribes sitting there and Pharisees " who " began to think in their hearts, saying within themselves : Why doth this man speak thus ? Who is this, who speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins, but God alone ? He blasphemeth. Which Jesus presently knowing in his spirit, that they so thought within themselves, he saith to them : Why think you these things in your hearts ? Why think you evil in your hearts ? Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy : thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, arise, take up thy bed and walk." Although these two efforts of power, in point of difficulty, be nearly equal, yet there is this difference between them, that the cure of the palsy is a thing which strikes the senses, and in which no one can be imposed upon : whereas in the former case, the object, which is the remission of sins, is not visible to the human eye, and therefore deception is more easy. But the person who can perform the second, which is obvious to the senses, ought to be implicitly credited, when he attributes to himself the former power, viz. that of forgiving sins, which is in itself invisible. Wherefore, to convince them, that he being the Son of Man, had a real and effectual power of forgiving sins, he undertakes to cure the sick man in their presence. " But that you may know," says he, " that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy : I say to thee, arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." The paralytic obeyed the command of Jesus, " and

immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed in which he lay, and went away in the sight of all. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and all were astonished, and they glorified God," that gave such power to men. "And they were filled with fear, saying: we have seen wonderful things to day," and "never before saw the like" to them.

We may observe in the above-mentioned cure, that Jesus enjoined the paralytic three things, which were naturally impossible to him in his debilitated state. The first was that of standing upright; the second was to take his bed upon his back; and lest this might be considered as a passing effort of nature, the third was to walk away thus loaded to his own home. These three circumstances or gradations rising one above the other, I mean health, strength, and labour, rendered his cure indisputable, and were consequently an evident demonstration of the remission of his sins, which being inward was not to be perceived by the eye. In like manner we may remark, that these three circumstances which served as proofs both of the corporal and spiritual cure of this paralytic, are still, in our regard, the most unerring marks of our sins being forgiven. A spiritual palsy is a habit of vice; the soul is cured of this malady by a renewal of the love of God; this renewed strength is shown in the sinner's subduing his passions, and applying himself to the practice of good works.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JESUS CALLS MATTHEW, EATS WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS,
AND VINDICATES HIS DISCIPLES IN NOT FASTING. MATT.
IX. 9—17. MARK II. 14—22. LUKE V. 27—39.

THE gospel here places before us Jesus, 1. Calling a publican to the apostleship; 2. Justifying his own conduct against such as censured it; 3. Justifying his disciples against the misrepresentations of those who envied their happiness. We

shall view him never losing sight of the mercy and compassion so congenial to his character, either whilst he confers the highest dignity in the Church upon a person who by merit had no claim to it, or whilst he shuts the mouth of calumny, and condescends to justify his own personal conduct against the attacks of envy and ignorance.

“And after these things, he went forth again to the sea side,” not so much to take the air after his fatigue, as to perform a work of mercy which he had in view. “And all the multitude came to him, and he taught them” as usual the way of salvation. “And as he was passing by” the quay “he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, a publican,” or tax-gatherer by profession. He was likewise “called Matthew,” and was “sitting at the custom-house; and” Jesus “saith to him: Follow me. And having left all, he rose up and followed him.” Without doubt he had often before heard Jesus preach, and had been charmed with his doctrine; and St. Jerome is of opinion, that a certain amiable brightness and air of majesty which shone in the countenance of our divine Redeemer, pierced his soul on this occasion, and strongly attracted him to his service. “And Levi,” considering himself highly honoured in being called to be one of Christ’s disciples, “made him a great feast in his house,” to testify his gratitude and joy. “And it came to pass as he was at table in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came and were at table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many that followed him.” Of these some were probably Matthew’s friends, whom he invited with the hope that, by our Saviour’s divine conversation, they might also be converted. “And the Scribes and Pharisees seeing that he ate with publicans and sinners, murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners? and why doth your master” likewise “eat and drink” with them? “Jesus hearing this, answering said to them: They who are in health need not a physician, but they who are ill. Go and learn what means this saying” of holy scrip-

ture (Osee vi. 6), "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and then you will know why I eat with publicans, and that in this I only do the will of my Father who sent me principally for them: "for I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance." Commerce with idolaters was forbidden the Jews, for fear of the contagion of vice by evil company. This law the proud Pharisees extended not only beyond its bounds, but even against the essential laws of charity, the first among the divine precepts. They scorned to converse with sinners even for the sake of reclaiming them, which the law, however, so far from forbidding, required as the first and most excellent of its precepts. Christ came from heaven, and clothed himself with our mortality, through the most tender compassion for sinners: he burned continually with the most ardent thirst for their salvation; and it was his greatest delight to converse with those that were sunk in the deepest abyss, in order to bring them to repentance and salvation.

Our Blessed Saviour having proved to the Pharisees how irreproachable his conduct was with regard to this intercourse with sinners, they made a second attack upon him, by laying to his charge the good cheer of his disciples, which they contrasted with his saying that he was come to call sinners to repentance; thus endeavouring to show that his actions did not correspond with his words. On the former occasion they had addressed themselves to his disciples and not to Jesus; here they do not appear as the chief accusing parties, but bring forward in their stead the disciples of John the Baptist, with whom they made a common cause, and who seemed to have taken umbrage at the feast given by a Publican. This accounts for St. Matthew attributing the attack in question to the disciples of John, whilst St. Luke considers the Pharisees as the authors of it, and St. Mark places it to both parties, it being evident that the disciples of John acted chiefly at the instigation of the Pharisees.

“Then came to him the disciples of John,” viz. at his departure out of Matthew’s house, “and likewise the Pharisees who used to fast, saying: Why do the disciples of John fast frequently, and practice praying, and likewise those of the Pharisees: but thine eat and drink, and fast not? Jesus answered them: Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast? Can the companions of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” No, certainly: “as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast:” so long as I am with my disciples, they cannot fast and weep. “But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them” by death, “and then they shall fast in those days.” Jesus became the bridegroom of the Church by the conversion of the Jews, her nuptials continued during the three years of his mission, and in heaven they will be consummated for all eternity.

“And he proposed to them” also this “similitude. No man putteth a piece,” taken, “from a new coat into an old coat; for so he both breaketh the new, and the patch from the new suiteth not with the old: for it taketh away the fulness thereof from the garment, and there is made a greater rent.” This comparison of the old garment represents the disciples of Jesus as yet accustomed to the life of the old man. The piece of new cloth represents the fasts and austerities of the new law. The holes in the garment, which would be rendered wider, represent the bad effects which would have ensued to his disciples from imposing new rigours on them in their present weak state, tending more to discourage than to increase their fervour.

Jesus next draws a comparison from the conduct observed by those persons who manage the vintages. “No one,” says he, “putteth new wine into old casks,” made of leather or skin, “for so the new wine” fermenting “breaketh the casks, and it will be spilled, and the casks lost,” which might otherwise have served for old wine. Thus it was with the disciples of Jesus in respect to the austerities of the

new law: they were, at that period, no more suited to undergo rigours than old and half-worn vessels were calculated for the holding of wine, which from its newness was in a state of fermentation. As wine in this state would inevitably burst asunder these old vessels, so austerities and fasts, to any great excess, would have caused the disciples in their actual feeble state to abandon their new undertaking. "But new wine," says Christ, "is to be put into new casks, and both will be preserved:" so in like manner let my disciples be first renewed by the Holy Ghost, and then they will be enabled to undergo the greatest rigours of penance. "And no one that drinketh old wine, hath presently a mind to new: for he says; the old is better." This last comparison is drawn from the medical science, and from that care which each man takes of his own health. They who are in the habit of using aged wine for their beverage, do not willingly change it for new, the former being deemed more wholesome from its being riper and less heady. This aged wine represents to us the Old Testament, which was proportioned to the weak state of the Jews, who were chiefly influenced by servile principles: but the new wine is the spirit of the gospel, inebriating the heart with a love which despises death, which pays no regard to the ties of blood or of friendship in opposition to the glory of God, and which undertakes things impossible to mere human nature. The disciples, habituated to the wine of the old law, were not yet sufficiently strong to bear the new wine of the gospel.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JAIKUS COMES TO JESUS.—A WOMAN IS CURED OF AN INVETERATE ISSUE OF BLOOD.—THE DAUGHTER OF JAIKUS IS RAISED TO LIFE. MATT. IX. 18—25. MARK V. 22—42. LUKE VIII. 41—56.

THE scene which is the subject of the preceding chapter took place upon the borders of the Lake Tiberias: and “as he was speaking these things to them, nigh unto the sea, behold there came a man whose name was Jairus; and he was a ruler of the synagogue” at Capharnaum: “he came up” to Jesus, “and seeing him, falleth down at his feet, and adored him, beseeching him that he would come into his house, for he had an only daughter almost twelve years old, and she was dying: and he besought him much saying: my daughter is at the point of death; but come, lay thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live. And Jesus rising up went with him, and a great multitude followed him, with his disciples: and it happened as he went, that he was thronged by the multitude: and behold a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered much from many physicians, and had bestowed all her substance on” them “and could not be healed by any, so that she was nothing better but rather worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself; If I shall touch only his garment I shall be healed; and forthwith the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil. And immediately Jesus knowing in himself the virtue that had proceeded from him, turning to the multitude, said: who has touched my garments? who is it that touched me? And all denying, Peter and they that were with him, said: Master, the multitudes throng and press thee, and dost thou say, who touched me? And Jesus said: somebody hath

touched me, for I know that virtue is gone out from me ; and he looked about to see her who had done this, and the woman seeing that she was not hid, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before his feet, and told him all the truth, and declared before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was immediately healed. But Jesus seeing her, said : be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole : go in peace, and be thou healed of this disease ; and the woman was made whole from that hour."

We may justly admire the profound humility of this woman in not daring to speak to Christ ; whilst at the same time we should learn to imitate her great faith and confidence in thus believing that the bare touching of Christ's garment would restore her to perfect health.

" As he was yet speaking, there cometh one to the ruler of the synagogue, saying to him ; thy daughter is dead : why dost thou trouble the master any further ? But Jesus having heard the word that was spoken, saith to the ruler of the synagogue," who was the father of the maid ; " fear not, believe only, and she shall be safe. And he admitted not any man to follow him, but Peter, and James, and John the brother of James," his beloved disciples. " And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout," as was usual on such occasions, " and the people weeping and wailing much, he said to them : why do you make this ado, and weep ? Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth," meaning that she was not to remain dead, but was presently to return to life, as if she had only been asleep. " And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead : but he having put them all out, suffered not any man to go in with him, but Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden, and entereth in where the damsel was lying," and " taking her by the hand, cried out saying : Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, damsel, I say to thee arise ; and her spirit



THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.

returned, and she rose immediately, and he bid them give her to eat, and she walked," for "she was twelve years old : and they, her parents, were astonished with a great astonishment, and he charged them strictly that no man should know it, and the fame hereof went abroad into all that country."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JESUS GIVETH SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN, AND HEALS A DUMB MAN POSSESSED BY A DEVIL. MATT. IX. 27—34.

"AND as Jesus passed from thence" to his own habitation, "there followed him two blind men, crying out and saying ; have mercy on us, O Son of David." This was no other than a public confession of his being the Messiah, to whom the voice of the people had ever exclusively consecrated the title of *Son of David*. However, Jesus not choosing to cure them in public, he continued to go forward, without making any reply ; and they, not considering this as a refusal, found means to follow him to his dwelling. This short trial of their faith evinced its firmness and constancy. "And when he was come to the house, the blind men came in to him ; and Jesus," moved with compassion, "saith to them : Do you believe that I can do this unto you ? They say to him : yea Lord," thus acknowledging his sovereign power. "Then he touched their eyes, saying : according to your faith, be it done unto you. And their eyes were" instantly "opened, and Jesus strictly charged them, saying : see that no man know this. But they going out," and following the impulse of their gratitude, "spread his fame abroad in all that country." It is sufficiently obvious that this injunction of silence which Jesus laid on those whom he cured of their several infirmities, was no wise obligatory before God, as Calvin supposes ; because the parties did not consider it as

an absolute prohibition, but ascribed it merely to his modesty and extreme humility. In this respect his conduct is a lesson to all his followers to beware of vain glory; for though Jesus himself was utterly incapable of this vice, he knew it was our most dangerous enemy.

“And when they were gone out” of the house, “behold they brought him a dumb man, possessed with a devil; and after the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke, and the multitude wondered, saying: never was the like seen in Israel.” Whereby they meant to say that God had never yet sent to them a prophet who cured all sorts of diseases with so great a display of power, or with such facility, or who had driven out all sorts of devils with an authority so absolute, as Jesus had done in their presence. These were the sentiments entertained by those who viewed the miracles of Jesus in a proper light, and as highly conducive to God’s glory and to the common benefit of mankind. “But the Pharisees,” imagining that his miracles derogated from their credit and reputation amongst the people, spoke of them in a very different manner, and “said, by the prince of devils he casteth out devils.” This their idea originated from a principle that is admitted by theologians, viz. that there exists a subordination among the infernal spirits; and that under one supreme chief, who exercises a general sway, there continues to be the same gradation of authority which subsisted amongst them before their fall. Thus, the Pharisees maintained that Jesus expelled the devils from the bodies of possessed persons, not by a divine power, but by the art of magic, because they supposed that by making a compact with the prince of the devils he had obtained a supreme power over all the inferior departments. Of this their blasphemous calumny, Jesus takes no notice at present, because they probably threw it out in a slight manner, and so as to make little or no impression upon the minds of the people; but when at a subsequent period they repeat it to him in the face of the public, then it will be seen with what force and perspicuity he will expose the futility of so ill-grounded an objection.

PART III.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHRIST CURES A MAN WHO HAD BEEN INFIRM FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS, AND BY SEVERAL ARGUMENTS JUSTIFIES THIS MIRACLE AND HIS MISSION IN GENERAL. JOHN V. 1—47.

“AFTER these things, there was a festival day of the Jews,” viz. the Passover, “and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” with his disciples to celebrate it, agreeably to what the law commanded, Deut. xvi. “Now there is at Jerusalem,” near to the sheep gate (so called because the sheep destined for the victims were brought that way), “a pond called Probatica,” where the entrails of sheep and beasts offered in sacrifice were washed, which in “Hebrew,” or Syriac, “is called Bethsaida,” or rather Bethesda, which means a house of mercy, from the cures performed there; “having five porches” or galleries for the convenience of the sick who flocked thither from all parts as to a great hospital. “In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered,” impatiently “waiting for the motion of the water: for an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved: and he that went down first into the pond, after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.” The circumstance of only one person’s being cured out of so numerous a concourse of such objects usually attending there, is a clear proof that so extraordinary an effect was not natural, but produced by some supernatural cause; since a medical quality in the water, of whatever nature it might be, could not rationally be supposed limited to a single object, but would of course have benefited a greater number. It is therefore to be deemed no other than a supernatural virtue imparted to this water by the Almighty, the effect thereof

being of momentaneous duration, and precisely attached to the very instant that the water was put in motion by the angel.

It being a matter of absolute uncertainty at what particular time the angel would produce this effect by the motion of the water, the diseased necessarily kept their stations with great anxiety under the adjoining galleries. Yet, under this general state of uncertainty, it was usual, we may suppose, for the angel to descend repeatedly during the course of the year, and perhaps frequently in every month, lest otherwise the patience of these distressed objects should be put to too severe a trial. Had they previously known the precise moment, no further attendance would have been requisite, except at the stated periods: but it was the will of God that they should purchase the regaining of their health by a compliance with conditions which were attended with some degree of tediousness, and with no small trial of their patience.

“And,” amongst other diseased and crippled objects, “there was a certain man there that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity. Him, when Jesus saw lying and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him,” to excite his faith and hope: “Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man,” conceiving that by this question Jesus meant no more than to express his pity and surprise at his miserable condition, when so near to this health-giving pond, “answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him: arise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and he took up his bed and walked,” thus exhibiting a substantial proof of his being perfectly cured: “and it was the Sabbath-day. The Jews therefore said to him that was healed: it is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. [Ex. xx. 10. Jer xvii. 24.] He answered them: he that made me whole

said to me: take up thy bed and walk;" and surely he that could heal me with a word must be a prophet, and therefore must have authority to bid me do this. "They asked him therefore: who is that man who said to thee, take up thy bed and walk? But he who was healed, knew not who he was; for Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place," to shun their applause, and lest he should add fresh fuel to the jealousy of the Pharisees. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple," giving thanks to God, "and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee," for thy insensibility and contempt of this mercy. "This man," actuated by a sentiment of gratitude towards his benefactor, "went his way, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. Thereupon the Jews," instead of being touched with respect for the author of so great a miracle, "persecuted Jesus," and endeavoured to put him to death, "because he did these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them," and justified his conduct by various arguments: first by the example of his heavenly Father: "My Father," says he, from the beginning of the world, "worketh until now," and the rest he entered upon after the creation, and which he was pleased to honour by that of the Sabbath, is no hinderance to the operations of power in the preservation of his works, nor to the operations of his grace in the sanctification of souls, "and I work also" with him, being one and the same in nature and substance with him: nay, even as man I do nothing but what is conformable to his will, and therefore I do not violate the Sabbath. "For this reason, then, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was his father, making himself equal to God" in one undivided nature. "Then Jesus answered and said to them," confirming still further the indivisible unity of action subsisting between him and his heavenly Father: "Amen, amen, I say unto you; the Son cannot do anything of himself, but what

he sees his Father doing: for what things soever he doth, these the Son also does in like manner: for the Father loveth the Son" with an infinite love, "and" therefore showeth him all things which himself doth, communicating to him with his divine nature his wisdom and power: "and greater works than these will he show, that you may wonder," and admire the power which he hath given him. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom he will," as well the life of the body to such as are dead, as the life of the soul to those who have lost it by sin. And this power the Father hath given him, because he hath made him judge over all men. "For neither doth the Father judge any man" in a visible manner: "but hath given all judgment to the Son," who at the end of the world will return in his human body as the ostensible judge of all mankind: and this he hath done, "that all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father: he who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him;" and therefore it is in vain that you pretend to honour God, whilst you dishonour me his Son whom he hath sent to you, in order to bring you to eternal life.

Jesus now proceeds to particularise those stupendous works which the Father will give him to perform with regard to the raising of the dead to life. These he reduces under three heads. The first is the spiritual resurrection, whereby a soul rises from the death of sin to the life of grace; and this he attests with the solemn asseveration of an oath. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth my word and believeth him that sent me, hath" a title to "life everlasting, and he falleth not into" that condemnation which awaits sinners, but is "passed from the death of sin" to "the life" of grace, and will one day pass from the corruption of a grave to incorruptible and eternal glory.

The second of these works is the raising of the dead to life corporally, which he distinguishes into two parts; viz. the resurrection of individuals, and that of mankind in

general (Acts xvii. 31). He begins by the resurrection of individuals. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." This was shortly after realised in the persons of the young man of Naim and of Lazarus. "For as the Father hath life in himself," proceeding from no other person, "so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself," because the Son in the same eternity always proceeded and proceeds from him so as to be equal in all perfections, and has life within himself, in such sort as to be a source or fountain of life to others. "And he hath given him power to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man," and as such is appointed judge of the world.

But the third work, viz. that of the general resurrection and judgment, is still more stupendous, and therefore Christ says: "Wonder not at this, which I have just mentioned; for the hour cometh wherein" not these few only, but "all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Jesus here concludes this wonderful justification of his conduct against the cavils of the Jews, who taxed him with a violation of the Sabbath; and from the principles he has here established, he draws this conclusion: that both in this instance and in every other action he can do nothing of himself, because he forms no judgment, nor executes any design but according as he hears, viz. according to the injunctions of his heavenly Father, which he fails not to observe. "I cannot of myself," says he, "do any thing. As I hear, so I judge: and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me," who is sovereign wisdom and justice.

These last-mentioned words concerning his Father who sent him, lead him now to a justification of his mission,

which forms the second part of this discourse, and is the chief subject of this dispute with the Jews. For if the certainty of his mission from God be once clearly established, nothing ought then to have prevented his being acknowledged as the expected Messiah. In order, therefore, to establish it, he produces various testimonies, viz. the testimony of John the Baptist, that of the voice of his Father, that of the Scriptures in general, and lastly the testimony of Moses in particular.

Jesus lays no stress upon the testimony he bears to himself. Hence he says: "If I bear testimony concerning myself, my testimony is not" such as to be admitted by you as "true," that is, as legal, or admissible in a court of judicature. "There is another that giveth testimony concerning me," to wit, "John the Baptist, and I know that the testimony which he giveth of me is true" and authentic. In effect, "you sent to John" yourselves, to know from his own mouth whether or not he were the Messiah, hereby evincing your readiness to receive him in that character, had he chosen to attribute it to himself: "and he gave testimony to the truth" of my being the Messiah. "But I receive not testimony from man," as if necessary for my justification: "but I say these things that you" by believing his testimony, "may be satisfied," by that faith which he exhorted you to have in me as the promised Messiah. "He was a lamp burning" with zeal for the glory of God, and "shining" to the edification of men by the doctrine he preached and by the example he held forth to all of a penitential life. "And you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light," acknowledging him as a prophet and a just man, and therefore I may reasonably allege his testimony in my favour. "But I have a greater testimony than that of John. For the works which my Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works themselves which I do" by the sovereign power which he hath communicated to me, "give testimony of me, that the" eternal "Father hath sent me. And the Father

himself who hath sent me, hath given testimony of me," on the banks of the Jordan, by a voice from heaven, saying : this is my beloved Son ; but " neither have you heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape : and even his " written " word you have not remaining in you, because you believe not him whom he hath sent." This subject he proceeds to explain more fully. " Search (or you search) the Scriptures, for in them you think to have life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony concerning me," as being that life and the way that leads to it. " And " having a veil over your eyes which blinds you, " you will not come to me," so clearly pointed out by the Scriptures ; " that you may have life " promised to those who believe in me.

By his insight into the hearts of the Jews, Jesus perceived that these several testimonies in his favour only caused them to conclude him to be a person ambitious of honour, and one who sought to pass for the Messias. He anticipates this their objection, by declaring that whatever he has hitherto said in his own favour was by no means said with a view to gain their esteem, but purely for the honour of God.

" I receive not glory from men," says he, " but " this I cannot say of you : for " I know " with sorrow, " that you have not the love of God in you." He here gives the reasons why they do not receive him and his doctrine ; because they are " void of the love of God, full of self-love, envy, pride, desirous of praise and glory from one another." Hence he says : " I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not : if another shall come in his own name," without any evidence of divine authority, such as Barchochabas or even Antichrist himself, " him you will receive. But how can you believe " me and my doctrine, so humiliating to human pride, you, " who are eager only to " receive glory one from another : and the glory which is from God alone," and which truly merits your care, you " do not

seek." However, "think not I will accuse you to the Father." I shall not need to do it. "There is one that accuseth you," even "Moses in whom you" now vainly "put your trust;" because you do not believe in what he told you. "For if you did believe Moses, you would also indeed believe me: for he hath written concerning me" that celebrated prophecy of Deut. viii. 15. "The Lord will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: him thou shalt hear." But if you do not believe *his* writings," for whom you profess so great respect, "how will you believe *my* words," whom you so much condemn as a person without authority, and a violator of the law? But still this testimony, however clear it may seem, is not sufficient for the unbelieving Jews, any more than the preceding ones; and hence may be drawn a proof of their subsequent reprobation. They pay no regard to Jesus himself, nor to John the Baptist, nor to the evidence of miracles, nor to the voice of God, nor to the Scriptures, nor even to Moses himself: their case, therefore is desperate, and they are not to be converted.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JESUS VINDICATES HIS DISCIPLES FOR PLUCKING EARS OF CORN
ON THE SABBATH-DAY. MATT. XII. 1—8. MARK II. 23—
28. LUKE VI. 1—5.

"AT that time Jesus," in his return from Jerusalem to Galilee, "went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath-day (called the second-first Sabbath); and his disciples being hungry, began, as they went along, to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees seeing them, said to him: behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day." The crime here alleged against them was not the gathering and rubbing of a few ears of corn (this being allowed, Deut. xxiii. 25),

but the doing it on a Sabbath-day, when the law forbade even the preparing of victuals ; much more this plucking ears of corn, which was considered as a kind of reaping, according to Maimonides. “And Jesus answering them, said, in defence of his disciples : “have you never read what David did, when he was under a necessity, and was hungry himself, and they that were with him ? How he went into the house of God,” which was then at Nobe, under Abiathar the high priest, and “eat the bread of proposition, and gave it to them that were with him, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for them that were with him, but for the priests only.”

The second argument employed by Christ to justify his disciples is taken from the work performed by the priests in preparing and offering the sacrifices of the temple. “Or have you not read in the law,” said he, “that on the Sabbath-days, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame ? But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple,” viz. the Lord and God who is there adored, and therefore that may be done for him without crime which is done for the temple without the smallest difficulty.

The third reason is taken from the preference which is due to an action of charity and of natural right before outward observances of religion, which are only of positive law. “And if you knew,” said he, “what this meaneth, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*” (Osee vi. 6), you would never have condemned the innocent, but suspended your rash judgments respecting my disciples, and would have preferred tenderness and condescension in their regard to a multiplicity of sacrifices offered in the temple.

“And,” as a fourth reason, he said to them : “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Since, therefore, in the concurrence of two incompatible precepts, we must give the preference to that which is the end and object of the other, in the present instance we

must prefer the preservation of life to the observation of the Sabbath.

The fifth and last argument is drawn from the authority of Jesus himself, who being the institutor and master of the Sabbath, had on this occasion dispensed his disciples from the strict observance of it. "Therefore," says he, "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath," and in cases which concern the welfare of mankind, has power to mitigate the exact observance required by the law.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JESUS HEALS THE WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH-DAY.—

THE DESIGNS OF THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS AGAINST HIM.—HIS MIRACLES AND MILDNESS. MATT. XII. 10—21. MARK III. 1—6. LUKE VI. 1—11.

To this complaint concerning the violation of the Sabbath the Evangelist adds another which had relation to the same subject. "When" our Lord "had passed from thence," he pursued his journey till he reached Galilee. "And it came to pass on another Sabbath, that he entered the synagogue" at Capharnaum, "and taught" the people according to his custom. "And there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched if he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find a" fresh "accusation against him. And they asked him, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" This question they proposed merely "that they might accuse him." For they thought within themselves, if he should answer in the negative, that it was not lawful, he would then be considered as rigid and unfeeling for the necessities of others; but if, on the contrary, he should assert it to be lawful, that he would then pass for a violator of the Sabbath. "But he knew their" secret "thoughts; and said to the man who had

the withered hand : Arise and stand forth in the midst ; and rising he stood forth " that all present might be witnesses to the cure which Jesus was going to perform in his behalf. " Then Jesus said to them : I ask you, if it be lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it ? " For there is no medium between good and evil when our neighbour is under any pressing necessity ; it being sinful not to relieve him, if it be in our power. " But they held their peace," being unable to make any reply but such as would pronounce their own condemnation. Had they answered, that it was unlawful on the Sabbath to do a good action, or to save the life of our neighbour, they would have deservedly incurred the censure even of the whole synagogue ; if, on the contrary, they admitted the lawfulness of doing good on the Sabbath-day, their question required no further answer, since to heal a sick person was manifestly a good work. But to bring conviction still more to their minds, " Jesus said to them : What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep, and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not take hold of it and lift it up ? How much better is a man than a sheep ? Therefore it is lawful to do a good deed on the Sabbath-days. And looking round about at them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, he said to the man : Stretch forth thy hand : and he stretched it forth, and his hand was restored to health, even as the other : and they were filled with madness." And the Pharisees going out immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. And Jesus knowing it, retired from thence with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude followed him from Gallilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan ; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude hearing the things which he did, came to him. And he spoke to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he healed many, so that they

pressed upon him to touch him, as many as had distempers : and he healed them all ; and he charged them that they should not make him known, in order to give us a lesson of humility, and to spare the Pharisees the additional vexation and rancour which each of his cures would have caused in their minds. “ And the unclean spirits when they saw him fell down before him ; and they cried, saying : thou art the son of God : ” and he strictly charged them that they should not make him known, in order to avoid the further irritation of his implacable enemies. All these things happened, “ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet,” (chap. xlii. v. 1.) concerning the election, the employment, and the behaviour of the Blessed Jesus, “ saying : behold my servant whom I have chosen ” among all others, “ my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased ; I will put my spirit upon him, and he will show judgment to the Gentiles.” In effect, Jesus published the divine ordinances, that is, the new law, not only for the Jewish people as Moses did, but for all the nations of the earth : and this office of legislator he performed not only by his own preaching, but by that of his apostles : he will likewise sit as judge at the last day, and exercise justice and judgment over all mankind. To fit him for this high employment, God poured forth upon him the full plenitude of his spirit, and his whole comportment bespoke an invariable meekness and condescension, according to that of the same prophet : “ he shall not contend ” with his enemies, “ nor cry out ” as they who quarrel, “ neither shall any man hear his voice ” aloud in the streets : “ the bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish,” but shall treat infirm souls with incredible tenderness and meekness, supporting those who are under temptation and on the point of falling, and cherishing in others that small spark of divine love which yet remains after their fall, and which discovers itself outwardly by sighs, in some degree analogous to the faint smoke which is emitted after the flame is extinguished. These weak desires of con-

version, these small remains of warmth, he will nourish in them, till he lights up again in their souls the flame of justice and divine love. In this exercise of inexhaustible goodness he will persevere to the end of time, even, “till he send forth judgment unto victory,” by making his gospel triumph over all his enemies. And in the meantime, “in *his* name the” converted “Gentiles shall hope,” looking up to him as the author of their salvation and happiness.

CHAPTER XL.

THE ELECTION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. MATT. IV. 25, AND V. 1. MARK III. 13—19. LUKE VI. 12—19.

“AND it came to pass in those days that” Jesus went out, and much people followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond the Jordan; and seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain,” which is generally supposed to be Mount Thabor, about five or six leagues to the north of Capharnaum. Designing now to make a solemn election of his twelve Apostles, and to give them an abstract or summary of the doctrine which they were to preach to the world, he previously retired “To pray, and passed the whole night in prayer to God” teaching us hereby how assiduous all ought to be in prayer before any important undertaking, and leaving to bishops in particular an example what they are to do in the great and momentous affair of ordaining and appointing persons to the ministry of the Gospel. “And when day was come, he called him whom he would himself” of his own disciples. “And they came to him, and he chose twelve of them,” with an audible and distinct voice, “and made that” these “twelve,” according to the number of these patriarchs, “should be with him” as his constant attendants, in order that he might train them up to the high ministry, for which

they were destined ; “ whom he also named Apostles, that he might send them ” in due time, “ to preach ” after having been first witnesses of his words and actions. “ And he gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils,” in order thus to prove by the authority of miracles the truth of the doctrine they taught. “ And to Simon he gave the name *Peter*,” which means a *rock* (this was the second time he had done it): “ And,” he called “ James the Son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, and he named them *Boanerges*, which is Sons of Thunder,” to express their future zeal in preaching the Gospel : “ And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes, perhaps for his singular zeal in the cause of God and religion. “ And Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot,” called so from a village near Samaria, “ who was the traitor.” This, according to St. Mark, is the order wherein the Apostles were called by Jesus. St. Luke differs only in two particulars. He joins Andrew with Peter his brother, and places Judas Thaddeus immediately before Judas Iscariot.

It is to be observed that the Apostles were not now actually sent, but only chosen and appointed in order to be sent hereafter. Their mission is described in Chapter 56. It is, however, probable that they received on this occasion a power of healing the sick, which was full and complete of itself, though it was not till afterwards that they were commissioned to exercise this power.

“ And Jesus coming down with them stood in a plain place,” which formed a part of the descent ; and the company of his disciples, “ and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast both of Tyre and Sidon were come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue went out from him and healed all.” By these miracles a full sanction was given to the doctrine which he was about

to preach. He then sat down on the edge of the mount, so as to be seen and heard at a distance, “and lifting up his eyes on his disciples, and opening his mouth, he taught them,” ranged in a circle around him, but so as to be heard by the people in the adjoining plain. He now began that divine discourse usually styled the Sermon on the Mount, which is justly considered as an abstract of all Christian morality.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT. MATT. V. 3. LUKE VI.

THIS admirable sermon may be divided into three parts, viz. the exordium, the body of the discourse, and the conclusion. Since all men aim at happiness, but for the most part unfortunately deceive themselves in the means by which it is to be attained, Jesus begins this discourse by showing both in what true happiness consists, and by what means it is to be acquired. He describes the happiness of eternity as the object of all others the most deserving our attention, and makes the happiness of this life to consist in the general means that may lead us to it; for certainly, the only real and solid happiness of mankind here is that of being in the direct road to a happy eternity hereafter. The eight *beatitudes* contained in the *exordium* we proceed to explain in the order observed by the Evangelists. 1. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” In this beatitude are comprised all those who, for the sake of Jesus Christ, voluntarily abandon their worldly possessions;—likewise all who, being born to a state of poverty, or reduced to it by accident, humbly submit to their lot without envying a more affluent state. Lastly, all those who, though abounding in worldly goods, yet place not therein their confidence or affection, but are ever ready to part with them, when the will of God calls for this sacrifice at their

hands. The former, who are really poor, as well as the latter, who are only so in spirit, enjoy happiness even in this life, because though they be here in indigence, or willing to be reduced to it if God so decree, yet as the kingdom of heaven with all its riches belongs to them, their well-founded claim is deservedly considered as the source of solid happiness.

2. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land." Jesus here declares all those to be happy who are meek, *i. e.* who, far from offending their neighbour, or doing him any harm, bend to the oppression of others, without even resisting such as are manifestly unjust. These are happy: because if their meekness exposes them to be ill-treated and driven from their possessions by the ambition and rapacity of others, heaven, upon that title, becomes their due as their own land and inheritance.

3. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." He declares those to be happy who are sorrowful according to God, who shed tears in his sight for their own transgressions and for those of others; or who lament the spiritual miseries and dangers of this life; or who bewail before God the public calamities which take place in the world, or the particular evils, whether temporal or spiritual, to which individuals of all ranks are subject. Persons of this description are deservedly declared happy, because heaven is their assured reward, which is here pointed out under the title of comfort in their afflictions.

4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall be filled." He declares all those to be happy who hunger and thirst after justice, *i. e.* who earnestly desire and pray that justice and order may reign both in themselves and others. These are happy in the assurance they have, that their virtuous wishes will one day be completely satisfied, when sin being destroyed even in its very source, which is concupiscence, God alone shall reign all in all, and fill them with a torrent of spiritual delights.

5. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." He declares all those to be happy who are merciful, viz. they who show a compassionate tenderness towards the miseries and wants of their neighbours, and who, if his miseries be corporal, readily afford him such helps as are proportioned to his wants and their own means; or, if of a spiritual nature, they endeavour to reform him by their instructions, or at least by their example give proofs of their merciful disposition, by forgiving injuries, or by fulfilling other duties of charity. These are happy, because a promise is here made to them, that heaven will one day be bestowed upon them as their crown and reward, and as a wonderful instance of God's gratuitous mercy.

6. "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." He declares those to be happy whose hearts are clean, and disengaged from all inordinate love of creatures: this cleanness extends itself from the heart to the whole man; it shows itself in the body by a chastity of manners, in the soul by a general mortification of the passions, in the will by simplicity and an upright intention, and in the mind by a rejection of all sinful thoughts. Persons of this description are happy because, being divested of all inordinate affections to creatures, which like clouds obstruct their sight, they shall one day see God face to face in his glory.

7. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." He declares peace-makers happy, *i. e.* all such as love peace, and procure it both to themselves and others; who are ever ready, by making the first advances, to seek a reconciliation with others, and to grant forgiveness to those who solicit for it by readily consenting to an oblivion of past differences. These are happy, because even in this life they are the children of God, who is the God of peace, and they will be infinitely more so hereafter in heaven, which is the kingdom of eternal peace.

8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He declares

those happy who suffer persecution, not like the wicked, in punishment of their crimes, but for justice and truth, *i. e.* for their faith and virtue ; who suffer, in a good cause, the loss of their country and friends, by banishment ; the loss of their honour, by marks of infamy ; the loss of their goods, by forfeiture ; of their liberty, by imprisonment ; of their health, by torments of their bodies or members by mutilation ; finally, who suffer the loss of their lives, by martyrdom. Happy are these, because after having fought in the cause of truth, heaven is justly their due ;—their acquired kingdom, the subject of their triumph and of their glory.

The last beatitude being the most important, Jesus enters into a more minute explanation of it, and thus encourages his disciples and followers when suffering in his cause. “Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, when they shall separate you from your friends,” “and country, by banishment and imprisonment, and shall reproach you” for being Christians and Catholics, “and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake ; and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice : for behold your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers persecute the prophets that were before you,” and the part you have in their sufferings will entitle you to share likewise in their glory.

To display this doctrine in yet a stronger light, Jesus contrasts the persons thus declared happy under four of these beatitudes, with four other descriptions of men, to whom he denounces eternal misery (Luke vi. 24). “But wo to you,” says he, “that are rich” in your hearts, whether really possessed of riches or only so in desire ; “because you have your consolation,” such as it is, here in this world. “Wo to you that are filled,” and make good cheer the sole object of your pursuit : “for you shall hunger” eternally hereafter. “Wo to you that now laugh,” and pass your time in vain pleasure and amusements : “for you shall

mourn and weep," hereafter without ceasing. "Wo to you," ministers, "when men shall bless" and applaud you "for preaching to them erroneous doctrines; for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets," who pleased them with easy and novel doctrines, such as were no less pernicious to the souls of men than they were flattering to their passions.

This discourse, as hinted above, is chiefly addressed to the Apostles, in order to instil into them, and all succeeding pastors of the Church, a right sense of the great duties belonging to their ministry; and, in the second place, it refers to all the faithful in general. Jesus first considers the Apostles and pastors of his Church as possessing the qualities suitable to the employment for which they were destined, as instructors of mankind. They are to instruct others by word and example.

"You are the salt of the earth," says he, "intended to preserve men from the corruption of sin, and to make them relish the truths of salvation. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out and to be trodden on by man." So it will be with you, if you let your faith and charity grow cold, in which is all your force; you will fall into contempt, and be deservedly rejected by God, and trampled upon by the world. "You are the light of the world by your doctrine and example, and, as a city seated on a mountain cannot be hid," so neither can you in this eminent station in which you are placed. What Christ here says of his Apostles is said likewise of his Church, which they represented. No object indeed ought to be more visible than that society which was to erect the standard of faith as a signal for all nations to resort to; otherwise, how could they, who, in this exile, sincerely seek the road to their heavenly country, distinguish the true teachers and guides who are appointed to direct them in that road, and point out the numberless errors that surround it. "Neither do men

light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So," in like manner," to answer the design of God in your regard, "let your light," the light of virtue and piety, "shine before men, that they may see your good works, and" hence "glorify your father who is in heaven. This precept is by no means contrary to that which he afterwards enjoins, of hiding our good works. He is here principally forming pastors for his church, who, being persons in public office, must consequently be exposed to the view of all; whereas in the place referred to, he instructs the faithful in their private capacities, whose duties in this respect are of a different nature. Or, rather, we may say with St. Gregory, that both pastors and people are here commanded to let their light shine before men by good works, but below they are cautioned not to seek in the performance of them human applause, but solely the glory of God. (St. Greg. hom. ii. in Evang.) Jesus next answered the objections which might be urged against the preceding doctrine. "Do not imagine," says he, "that," in giving these new instructions, "I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil them." For as to the moral precepts of the law, these I elucidate by pointing out their extent, by adding what is wanting to their perfection, and by bestowing the graces necessary for their observance. As to the ceremonial precepts of the law, I bring the truth and reality, of which they were but figures; and thus, instead of annulling, I rather fulfil them. "For, amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass" away, "one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled" which it contains, both in the complete verification of its figures, as well as by a perfect compliance with all its precepts. This shows that all the figures of the old law, *i. e.* of the Old Testament, began to be accomplished only at the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the end and object of the law. From this necessary fulfilment of the law he draws

two conclusions. The first is against those who annul the letter of the law. "He, therefore, that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," from which he shall be for ever excluded. "But they that do and teach" all that the law ordains, "shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The second conclusion he draws against those who, observing the letter of the law, destroyed the spirit of it, which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees : but Christ assures us that this their practice will be no excuse for us, if we imitate them. "For I tell you," says he, "unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This last conclusion opens to Jesus a wide field, and he thence takes occasion to enter into a more circumstantial detail of such precepts as he judges proper to add to the express letter of the law, and to point out such parts as were defective, both in the doctrine and practice of the Pharisees, especially with relation to murder, adultery, perjury, revenge, and what regards the love of our neighbour. 1st. In regard to murder, Christ says to his hearers : "You have heard, that it was said to them of old ; thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that not only he who murders, but whosoever is angry with his brother," without cause, "shall be in danger of the judgment" appointed for lesser offences. "And whosoever shall say to his brother, *raca*," or any other injurious word, "shall be in danger of the council," or sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy-two persons, where the highest causes were tried. "And whosoever shall say, *thou fool*," with contempt, spite, or malice, "shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar (and the same is to be said of a Christian about to receive the sacred body of Christ), and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first

to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift. And when thou goest with thy adversary to the ruler, make an agreement speedily, whilst thou art in the way " of this life, " and endeavour to be delivered from him, lest perhaps he draw thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison," either of purgatory or hell. "I say to thee thou shalt not go out thence, until thou pay the very last mite." We may consider the present life as a *way* in which we are travelling towards eternity. Our *adversary* is an evil conscience, which reproaches us with our guilt, or it may be the divine justice which demands vengeance of it. God himself is the *Judge*. If therefore we do not satisfy our adversary, by true repentance, during this life, while we are in the way, when we come to die, and are presented before the judge, we shall be condemned to the prison of purgatory or of hell, where we must remain till by our sufferings we have fully satisfied the divine justice for the debt we owe, even to the last farthing. Jesus now passes to the sixth commandment, which the Pharisees restrained to the outward action itself. "You have heard," says he, "that it was said to them of old : thou shalt not commit adultery : but I say to you," that this extends likewise to sinful desires, and "that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Under the sense of *seeing* Christ comprises all the steps and incitements which lead to sin : and under the word adultery, all other sins of impurity. "And if thy right eye scandalize thee," and become an occasion of sin, "pluck it out and cast it from thee : for it is expedient for thee, that one of thy members should perish, rather than the whole body be cast into hell : and if thy right hand scandalize thee," and cause thee to sin, "cut it off and cast it from thee : for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that the whole body go into hell." Here, by the hand and the eye, the dearest and most necessary parts of

the body, Christ understands all those persons, even the nearest and dearest of our connections, who are the occasion of sin ; and he commands us to break off all communication with such as these without delay or demur. “ It hath also been said : whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce,” or a writing by which he declares that he repudiates her, and gives her full liberty of taking another husband. “ But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery : and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.” This sentence has two parts, in reference to the law of divorce, as explained by the Pharisees. 1. Christ allows a separation from bed and board, but only in the case of adultery, whereas the Pharisees extended the lawfulness of it to many capricious and fanciful cases. 2. After admitting the lawfulness of a divorce in the above-mentioned case, the bond of marriage still remains undissolved ; for what God has joined no man can separate ; whereas the Jews, after having repudiated their wives, scrupled not to marry again, allowing likewise to their former wives a similar liberty. Hence the Church of God has never understood the above exception as implying a dissolution of the bond of marriage, or as in any respect allowing the innocent party to marry again, but, on the contrary, has condemned, in the strongest terms, those who teach a different doctrine.

Jesus now proceeds to the subject of oaths, and condemns the rash, hasty use which the Jews made of them. “ Again you have heard that it was said to them of old : thou shalt not forswear thyself, but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all,” except in an important and necessary case, “ neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool ; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King,” the seat of his empire and religious worship. “ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one

hair white or black:" and so of other creatures, we are forbid to swear by them, because of the near connection which exists between them and their Creator. "But let your speech," says Christ, "be yes, yes; no, no; and that which is over and above these proceedeth from evil," *i. e.* from the bad dispositions of men's hearts, of whom some are mistrustful and incredulous, others are liars and dissemblers. He condemns not oaths in themselves, nor says they are evil; but only that they spring from an evil principle. This suffices to render them unlawful when unnecessary, and to justify them where necessity calls for them. For there are some things, the origin of which may be vicious, and the use nevertheless innocent and harmless. Our Blessed Lord having enforced the reverence which we ought to bear towards God, and also towards his creatures, in the use of oaths, and having likewise recommended simplicity and moderation in our conversation, proceeds to some other precepts regarding our carriage to our neighbour, such as were also misinterpreted by the Pharisees, and transgressed in common practice. He says to them: "You have heard it has been said: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (Ex. xxi. 24; Lev. xxxiv. 20); from whence your doctors have inferred, that revenge is allowable in proportion to the injury received. "But I say to you not to resist evil," by revenging yourself of him who hath done evil to you; "but if one strikes thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him," rather than enter into litigation, "because the greatest loss is that of peace and mutual charity." But we must not conclude from hence, that it is unlawful for the injured party to have recourse to the laws when he cannot otherwise have justice done him; for if this were the case, the public good of society, as well as of private individuals, would be materially effected. What our Lord therefore designed to inculcate in the present instance, was a general lesson of

meekness and patience under injuries, in opposition to a revengeful disposition and rigorous retaliation of every wrong. He thus proceeds: "And whosoever will force thee one mile," to help him on his journey, "go with him other two," rather than lose thy patience and be wanting in charity. "Give to every one that asketh thee," when in real necessity, "and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away. And of him that taketh away thy goods, demand them not again," in the courts of justice, with the view of inflicting punishment on him. "And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner."

After having thus discoursed concerning revenge, Jesus is led by the affinity of the subject to treat of the necessity of suppressing all hatred. "You have heard," says he, "that it hath been said: thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy (Lev. xxx. 18). But" this latter part is only a false gloss which the doctors have added to the law: "I say to you, love your enemies," bless them that curse you, "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." It is only by thus imitating his goodness that you can hope one day to partake of his glory. "For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have; do not even the Publicans the same? Even sinners love those that love them, and "if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thanks" are due "to you? for sinners also do this: and if you lend to them, of whom you hope to receive, what thanks" or reward, "are" due "to you? for sinners also lend to sinners, that they may receive an equivalent. And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens the same? But love ye your enemies, do good and lend" to the necessitous, "hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be

the sons of the Most High : for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect," that is, be always tending to perfection ; and this will appear in your meekness, in your goodness and charity ; and above all, in a profound humility, which alone can ensure to you the merit of your good works.—These sublime lessons of our Lord, though not strictly obligatory in all cases, are equally conducive to our happiness as to our perfection. If we follow them in the practice of our lives, we shall, by a little suffering, always preserve a firm peace and tranquillity of mind, whilst resistance and contention terminate only in hatred and desires of revenge. Beside, we shall frequently, by our forbearance and condescension, gain over our brother, and thus receive voluntarily from him that recompense and compensation which violent measures could never obtain : at least, this we are sure of, that our heavenly Father will one day abundantly recompense us for all those sufferings which we now submit to for his sake, and with the intention of preserving mutual peace and concord. Lastly, these heroic practices of humility and patience, as they show a contempt of earthly things, as not worth contending for, so they evince a desire of suffering in conformity to our crucified Lord, and will therefore, by a perfect Christian, be considered rather as favours to be embraced, than as evils to be avoided.

CHAPTER XLII.

CONTINUATION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—OF ALMS-DEEDS, PRAYER, AND FASTING, &c. MATT. VI.

OUR Lord, having thus expounded the true extent of several precepts, proceeds further to instruct his Apostles, and all his followers, in the right manner of performing their good

works in general, especially those three great Christian duties of prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting. The Pharisees, it seems, vitiated all their good works by doing them from human motives, and merely out of vanity and ostentation. Our Blessed Saviour therefore cautions his Apostles and followers against this defective and mercenary intention, lest by it they lose the fruit of all their good actions. "Take heed," says he, "that you do not your justice ;" that is, your good works, "before men, to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven ;" for he recompenses only in the next life what is done for his sake in this. Therefore when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou givest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth ;" that is, observe an inviolable secrecy in regard to others, and even, if it were possible, with regard to thyself. "That thy alms may be in private, and thy Father who seeth in private, will repay thee" before men and angels at the last day.

Having thus described the right method of giving alms-deeds, Jesus next proceeds to the subject of prayer, and corrects two abuses ; the first of which was common to the Pharisees, and the other to the heathens. "And when ye pray," said he, "you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men : Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret : and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee" before all. Jesus here finds fault with that depraved intention in praying, which criginates from a desire of attracting the notice and admiration of men, but by no means does he blame public prayers, such as are offered up to God in places set apart for the divine worship.

Our Lord then proceeds in the following manner: "And when thou art praying, speak not much as the heathens, for they think they are heard by reason of their speaking much. Be not therefore like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask him." This admonition relates to the Pagans, who, in an infinite multiplicity of words and flowing language, displayed their miseries and wants, and reasoned with the Divinity upon the subject of their requests, painting them in the most lively colours, as if they would instruct God respecting their necessities, and obtain redress by the display of their eloquence. In lieu of this erroneous practice, he substitutes a perfect model of prayers, which in few words comprises all that we should ask of God, and places each thing to be asked for in its proper rank. "You shall pray therefore in this manner," says he: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, amen." This prayer, which is called by Tertullian a summary of the whole Gospel, and by St. Cyprian, a Compendium of heavenly Doctrines, is truly the prayer of the children of God, and may be divided into a preface and a recital of our several wants and petitions. In the preface we mention the two foundations upon which the success of our petitions is grounded: the first is the goodness and mercy of God which we suppliantly acknowledge, by styling him *Our Father*: the second is his infinite power, which we profess by adding, that he dwells in heaven; and these two attributes of God, viz. his goodness and his power, we consider as necessary for obtaining the effect of our prayers; for what could we expect from the goodness of God, unless it were omnipotent, or from his power, unless it were accompanied with mercy? Of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer, the three first refer to the glory of God, the four others to our own wants.

1. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we ask that his name may be hallowed; that is, that he may be known, feared, loved, and adored by us, and by all the nations of the earth; not merely by words of praise and homage, but chiefly by a purity and holiness of life, which give glory to his holy name. 2. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we beg that his kingdom may come to be established throughout the world. This kingdom is begun at present in our souls by grace, and will be perfected hereafter in glory, when Christ shall have vanquished all his enemies, and shall reign triumphant over his elect for all eternity. 3. We petition for the increase of God's glory, when we ask of him, that his will, which is declared to us in his commandments, in his counsels and prohibitions, may be as perfectly obeyed upon earth by us and by all mankind, as it is by the angels in heaven; a petition which presupposes the necessity of God's grace, to enable us to perform whatever is pleasing to him. 4. As to our several wants and necessities, we first petition for our corporal food, but we ask for nothing beyond what is necessary for our sustenance. As to our souls, we ask for the bread of truth, of grace, and of the word of God, and both for our bodies and our souls we ask for the bread of the holy Eucharist, that is, the sacred body of Jesus Christ. 5. In the fifth petition, we beg that our debts, that is, our sins and offences, may be remitted to us, that we may be reinstated in God's grace, which either totally or in part we have lost by sin; and in order to prevail with God to grant our request, we profess our readiness to comply with the condition he requires of us, which is that of previously granting a full forgiveness to all such as have trespassed against us. 6. After praying to be delivered from *past*, we next beg to be preserved from *future* sins, and to be victorious over all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh. 7. Lastly, we pray to be delivered from all those evils which are the just punishment of sin, whether they regard body or

soul, this world or the next. Hence, as to this life, we beg of God to grant us mercy of those scourges which we have reason to apprehend from his justly provoked anger ; as to the next life, we pray that he would not give us up to those evil spirits, who are the ministers and executioners of his justice.

Jesus then repeats the condition on which we may hope to receive forgiveness of our sins, thereby to confirm more forcibly what he had asserted above. "For if you forgive others their offences," says he, "your heavenly Father will also forgive you your sins. But if you will not pardon men, neither will your Father pardon you your sins." Jesus next proceeds to the subject of fasting, and he directs his disciples to lay aside that appearance of grief and sadness which the Pharisees affected on their fasting days. "And when you fast," says he, "be not as the hypocrites sad ; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face," as on other days, "that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee," in the face of the whole world.

Jesus having thus given us rules for the most perfect performance of the three good works of prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting, by directing us to seek in them God's glory instead of human applause, next proceeds to rectify the erroneous sentiments and principles of mankind, respecting riches, the motives of our actions, worldly solicitude, and rash judgments. As to riches he says: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth : where the rust and moths consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But" by distributing your wealth to the poor and employing it in good works "lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven ; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume ; and where thieves do not break through nor steal." This pre-

cept of Jesus is grounded on the principle that mankind ought to lay up *eternal* treasures, on which they may subsist for ever, and that it is the height of imprudence in immortal beings to provide no otherwise for their eternal subsistence than by treasuring up goods of the most perishable nature.—A second reason is drawn from the danger of attaching our hearts to earthly pursuits. “For where thy treasure is,” says Christ, “there is thy heart also.” In effect, experience shows that they who hoard up earthly treasures, think of nothing but of the earth, and with difficulty raise up their minds to objects more deserving their esteem; whilst on the contrary, such as lay up treasures in heaven, form no wishes but for heaven, where all that is dear and precious to them is kept in the manner of a sacred deposit for their eternal benefit. Jesus, then, desirous to make us understand how important it is to act with a pure intention, makes use of this comparison: “the light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be” pure and “single, thy whole body shall be lightsome; but if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome.” In this figure, the eye, which enlightens us, is the intention which we form, and which is either good or bad; if it be good, and direct us to the end by lawful means, then the whole body of the action and our whole lives become holy and pleasing in the sight of God. On the contrary, if the end and intention be evil, in vain do we employ such means as are lawful: the whole body of the action will be vicious in the sight of God, because the evil which it contains corrupts that part which would otherwise have been good, and the good part does not rectify what is vicious in its nature.—Hence he proceeds to show how corrupt and vitiated that action must be which is bad in itself, and which moreover proceeds from a bad motive and intention. “If then the light that is in thee be darkness;” says he, “the darkness itself how great shall it be?” In other words, how extremely vitiated must that action be, which, in its own nature, is vicious, and which likewise originates from a

depraved motive or intention? "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. "If then thy whole body be lightsome, having no part of darkness; the whole shall be lightsome, and as a bright lamp that enlightens thee." That is, take heed lest that which you take for light, viz. for the principle of your conduct, be not darkness itself, and the result of false maxims. But, on the contrary, if your whole body, if all that you are, your mind, your will, your senses, and your prevailing inclination, be so enlightened by the beams of justice and of rectitude, that concupiscence mingles nothing of its darkness and corruption, then all which shows itself outwardly, will be lightsome: the thoughts, the desires, intentions, words, and actions will all partake of that same light of justice, and this single eye will enlighten you in a manner as clear as if a burning lamp shone before all your steps.

Jesus now proposes another argument against the inordinate love of riches. "No man can serve two" opposite "masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other: or he will sustain the one and despise the other." Thus, "you cannot serve God and Mammon:" for their commands are diametrically opposite. God enjoins us not to hoard up riches, but to make good use of them, whilst on the contrary, avarice leads us to disobey and despise God for the sake of filling our coffers. It is evident that two extremes so opposite to each other cannot both be complied with. Hence he concludes that we must not be solicitous even for the wants of this present life, which are the usual pretexts by which men cover their avarice. "Therefore I say to you: be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat, nor for the body what you shall put on. Is not your life more than your meat, and your body more than your raiment." Wherefore he who has given you life, will not refuse you meat, and he who has given you a body, will not deny you raiment. "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ;

and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you" his children "of much more value than they?" Wherefore fear not lest he should abandon you. "And" moreover what will this fear avail you? For "which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? and for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they labour not, neither do they spin: But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory, was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be ye not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek," as having no faith or knowledge of divine providence. But do you banish such anxiety and disquietude: "for the Father knoweth that you have need of all these things," and his paternal goodness will not suffer you to be in want of them. "Seek therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added to you. Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow, for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" and hence you must not, by vain disquietudes, torment yourselves with the apprehension of future evils, which you suffer not at present, and which perhaps you will never have to suffer. In this instruction Christ condemns not a reasonable foresight as to the wants and necessities of life, but only forbids that anxious and restless solicitude which takes the alarm at everything, which trusts not in providence, but in all things relies solely upon its own ever watchful endeavours.

As there is a natural propensity in man to censure and condemn the actions of others, Jesus cautions us against this uncharitable disposition; contrasting it with the virtue of charity, which, by a commendable gradation, begins with carefully avoiding all possible injury to our neighbour, and ends with doing him all the good in our power. "Judge

not," says Christ, "and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be forgiven. For with what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged; and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." This rule, which God will most certainly follow, ought surely to restrain that liberty which we so often take of rashly judging and condemning others. On the contrary, be liberal to your neighbours; freely give to the necessitous, "and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall they give into your bosom. And he spoke also to them a similitude," to show the arrogant presumption of the Pharisees, and of those ignorant persons who set themselves for teachers of mankind, and delude the people by their false maxims. "Can the blind lead the blind? Do not they both fall into the ditch?" And he confirmed this by another proverb no less common than the preceding one, viz. "The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect if he be as his master;" showing that those who followed the Scribes and Pharisees as their teachers, were not likely to have better sentiments and principles than they had. "And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye," *i. e.* a small defect in his morals: "but the beam that is in thine own eye," a great enormous crime in thy own interior, "thou considerest not. Or how canst thou say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thine own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye." Correct first thy own greater faults, and then think of censuring the less failings of others; cure thyself of that insatiate avarice, of that lurking pride, of that base jealousy, of those secret unclean practices, and thou wilt more clearly see and be better qualified to direct thy brother, and point out to him his smaller faults and transgressions.

CHAPTER XLIII.

FURTHER CONTINUATION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATT. VII. LUKE VI. AND VII.

THE conclusion of this divine discourse consists of an exhortation to a life of piety, and contains several advices, some of which chiefly regard pastors, others indiscriminately all the faithful in general.

First, Jesus cautions all pastors, and such as preach the Gospel, not to subject the holy mysteries of religion to the scoffs and derisions of the impious, nor by that means expose their own persons to danger of being contemned and persecuted by them. "Give not that which is holy to the dogs," says he; "neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you."

Jesus next gives various instructions to the rest of the faithful, relative to the working out their salvation, and they are such as naturally result from the doctrine which he has hitherto set forth. Of these some regard the means of salvation, others treat concerning the obstacles to it. The first means is prayer, of which he says: "Ask and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you," expressing hereby the great success to be expected from earnest and fervent prayer. "For every one that asketh," says he, "receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him," in a proper manner.

The second means of salvation is a strict equity and uprightness in regard to our neighbour, arising from a happy

mixture of charity and justice, in which consists the very essence of the Evangelical doctrine. "All things therefore," says he, "whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them; for this is the law and the prophets." He however supposes, as a necessary condition, that the intention as well as the action itself be virtuous, and proceed from a motive of divine love.

The third means of salvation is to enter by the narrow gate and to walk in the narrow way, in opposition to the easy broad way of the world. "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go thereat." We must here remark, that in the scripture style, to walk, means to live; the way wherein we walk, is the life we lead; the gate through which we enter, is the first commencement of our lives. Jesus styles the way which he directs us to follow, the *narrow* way, and it is rendered such by the narrow and confined limits of the divine law; for, as on the one hand, this law is uniform and inflexible in its decisions, so, on the other, the constant observance of them is extremely difficult, owing to the bent of our natural corruption, which draws us with great violence to a life free from constraint. It is this extreme difficulty which causes Jesus to cry out, as it were, in astonishment: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!" On the contrary, by the broad road and the wide gate, is meant that liberty which mankind allow themselves of following all the corrupt inclinations of nature, as well in those instances where they are implicitly followed without a thought or a scruple, as in others where, in order to avoid the appearance of sin, a fallacious casuistry is invented, purposely calculated to flatter such consciences as are not unwilling to be deceived.

Hence the fourth means of salvation is, carefully to avoid false prophets or teachers, who by their erroneous doctrines lead their followers into the broad road of perdition. Jesus

describes briefly the danger there is of being deceived by the outward show of piety, and, at the same time, gives marks whereby they are to be known. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep," *i. e.* putting on the outward garb of truth and virtue, such as a great zeal for the scriptures, a meekness of speech, abundance of consoling words, and assurances of salvation, together with a recommendation of good works: "but," notwithstanding this outward show, "inwardly they are ravenous wolves," having no other view but to devour the flock of Jesus Christ, by enticing the sheep out of the fold, *i. e.* out of the bosom of the Catholic Church.

He now gives to his disciples a certain mark whereby to discern these wolves. This is, to examine them not merely by the doctrine they outwardly announce, since the truth of this very doctrine is the subject in question, nor yet by their individual actions, however apparently virtuous; but by the fruits and effects of their doctrine, which are ever false and leading to damnation. Hence our Blessed Saviour says: "By their fruits you shall know them: for there is no good tree that bringeth forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor from a bramble bush do they gather the grape. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruit you shall know them. A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

The fifth means of salvation is, to unite a sound faith with good works; and Jesus here describes the different lot of those who have faith alone without good works, and of such

as unite them both together. To the former he says: "And why do you call me Lord, Lord: and do not the things which I say? Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he" only "that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me you that work iniquity:" words which ought to make all those pastors tremble with a salutary fear, who having cast out devils, either from the souls of the faithful by the sacrament of baptism and penance, or from their bodies by exorcism, yet neglect to labour sincerely in the sanctification of their own souls.

But the lot of those persons who support their faith by good works is very different from that of the former; and Jesus paints their prudent conduct and constancy by a comparison with which he closes this long discourse. "Every one that cometh to me and heareth my words, and doth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like to a wise man, who building a house, digged deep, and laid the foundation upon a rock; and an inundation coming, the torrent beat against that house, but could not shake it. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." In this parable, the foundation of the building is a true faith in Jesus Christ; to erect a building upon this foundation is *to do* as well as *to believe*; it is to join the performance of good works to a sound faith. The winds which blow are those trials which we undergo from the defamatory or abusive language of our adversaries, from unjust laws, unlawful commands, threats, promises, or verdicts affecting our reputation. The rains are the beginning of persecutions: torrents and floods represent popular tumults and persecutions venting themselves with great vio-

lence upon the innocent in a variety of torments, even unto death. The trial of the last day will consist in that fire which will consume and purify the world in lieu of the winds, storms, and floods. In vain will all these fall upon that man whose faith shall be firmly established by good works. He then views unmoved and unhurt the violence of the storm directed against him.

Jesus now contrasts the happiness of such a Christian with the miserable condition of one who listens indeed to his words but reduces them not to practice. “And every one that heareth these my words and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, without a foundation, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof:” because the faith of this man, being destitute of good works, had nothing to defend it from the temptations and trials assailing it, it consequently cannot stand the trying fire of the last judgment: and hence, notwithstanding his faith, such a one must eternally perish. “And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these discourses in the hearing of the people, they were struck with admiration at his doctrine. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes and Pharisees,” who depended upon the art of reasoning and human literature.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHRIST CLEANSES A LEPER AND RETIRES INTO THE WILDERNESS TO PRAY. MATT. VIII. 1—4. MARK I. 40—45. LUKE V. 12—15.

“AND when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and it came to pass, when he was in a certain city,” named Capharnaum, “behold a man full of leprosy came, and falling on his face adored him, beseech-

ing him ; and kneeling down he said to him : Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." This prayer, though short, admirably expresses the sentiments which ought to animate us when we address ourselves to the Almighty : it is humble and modest, as appears by the leper's suppliant posture. It proceeds from a strong faith, which acknowledges the omnipotence of Jesus in the cure of all diseases. Lastly, his request is not peremptory but conditional ; he makes the success thereof to depend, not upon the merit of his own faith, nor on the urgency of his prayer, but entirely on the will of Jesus : *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* The success which attended this petition is an encouragement for us to pray with the like dispositions. " And Jesus having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand, and touching him " without fear of uncleanness, " said : I will, be thou made clean. And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean : and, threatening him, he forthwith sent him away," lest his longer stay might attract the notice of the bystanders : and to caution us still more against vanity and ostentation, " he charged him," saying : " See thou tell no one, but go show thyself to the high-priest, as the law prescribes, and offer," in acknowledgment, " for thy cleansing, the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony" to convince " them," that all power is given to me from God as the promised Messiah, and that I make use of this power for the accomplishment of the law. " And he being gone out," no longer thought himself bound to the secrecy which his benefactor had recommended, but from motives of gratitude began to publish and blaze abroad the word ; and his fame was the more spread about, so that he could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places, and they flocked to him from all sides, to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities ; and he retired farther " into the desert and prayed " (Luke v. 16). While we admire, on this occasion, the goodness and power of Jesus exerted in

favour of an unfortunate leper, let us remember that he is equally ready to heal the leprosy of the soul, as he was formerly to heal that of the body. The leprosy of the soul is sin; and if we desire to be cured of it, we must apply to Jesus with faith, with confidence, and with an humble and contrite heart.

CHAPTER XLV.

JESUS RESTORES TO HEALTH THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.
MATT. VIII. 5—13. LUKE VII. 1—10. HE RAISETH
THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIM. LUKE VII. 11—16.

“AND when he had entered Capharnaum, the servant of a centurion, who was dear to him, was ready to die; and when he had heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the ancients of the Jews, desiring him to come and heal his servant, saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying to him: he is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue. And Jesus saith: I will come and heal him. And Jesus went with them: and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent his friends to him, saying: Lord give not thyself this trouble; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. For which reason neither did I esteem myself worthy to come to thee: but command with a word only, and my servant will be healed: for I,” though “a man subject to authority,” yet “having under me soldiers, I say to one, go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it.” If I, therefore, though merely a subaltern officer, am so readily obeyed both by soldiers and servants, how much more will obedience be paid to your commands, who art the Lord of all things! “Which Jesus hearing, wondered; and turning about to

the multitude that followed him, he said: Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great a faith in Israel." Then taking occasion, from this circumstance, of a stranger and a Gentile becoming one of his believers, Jesus announced to his hearers two future events infinitely more astonishing: these were, first, the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and second, the reprobation of the Jews. "And I say to you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom," that is, the Jews to whom belonged the heavenly kingdom, on account of their descent from the patriarchs, their vocation and the divine promises, "shall be cast out into exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion," by his deputies; "go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee: and the servant was healed at the same hour. And they who were sent, being returned to the house, found the servant whole who had been sick."

The words of the centurion, by which he owned himself not worthy of a visit from Jesus Christ, have been adopted by the Church, as expressive of the humble and devout sentiments which ought to animate us, when about to receive a visit from Jesus Christ in the holy communion. For many ages they have been consecrated to this solemn purpose, and ought, by every communicant, to be repeated together with the priest. Happy those who, like the centurion, repeat them with sentiments of most lively faith, of the most profound humility, and of the firmest confidence in the power and goodness of Jesus.

"And it came to pass afterwards, that he went into a city that is called Naim," from its pleasantness, situated upon the edge of the torrent at Cison, not far from Nazareth and Mount Thabor; "and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out" to be

buried (for in those times they usually buried without the walls of towns, in order to avoid the legal uncleanness, as well as the unwholesomeness of the contrary practice). He had been snatched away in the flower of his youth, was "the only son of his mother: and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen," overwhelmed with grief, and bathed in tears, "being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her, weep not. And he came near and touched the bier: and they that carried it, stood still, and he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he gave him to his mother. And there came a religious "fear on them all, and they glorified God, saying; a great prophet is risen amongst us, and God has visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the country round about."

CHAPTER XLVI.

JESUS GIVES TESTIMONY IN FAVOUR OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MATT. XI. 7—23. LUKE VII. 24—35.

THE fame of Christ's miracles was spread abroad, and had reached even the prison of Macheron, where John the Baptist was under confinement. "For his disciples told him of all these things" which Jesus had done, and not without visible marks of jealousy and emulation. "Now when John had heard these" wonderful "works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him: art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" The design of John on this occasion was to cure his disciples of their prepossessions against Jesus, and to convince them that he was the Messiah whom they expected. He was the more desirous of this, as he foresaw that his own death was now at hand. "And when the men were come unto him, they said: John the

Baptist hath sent us to thee, saying: art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" Instead of giving a direct answer, Jesus referred them to the plain evidence of his actions and miracles. For "in that same hour, he cured many of their diseases, and hurts, and evil spirits; and to many that were blind he gave sight. And" then "answering" the disciples of John, "he said to them: go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the gospel is preached," and even with more success than to the rich. As a particular rebuke to these deputies who, out of jealousy, censured many of his actions, and indeed the whole tenor of his conduct, Jesus added: "and blessed is he whosoever shall not be scandalized in me." The whole of what Jesus said on this occasion, was not only an answer to the question proposed, whether he were the promised Messiah; it was also a decisive proof of it, since, by establishing the certainty of his miracles, it unanswerably applied to him the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah. (Isa. xxxv. 45.) It was, in fact, equivalent to an answer couched in the following terms: go and relate to your master, John the Baptist, that with your own eyes you have seen fulfilled by me all those wonderful things foretold by the prophets concerning the Messiah. "And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak to the multitudes concerning John:" this he did in the highest terms of commendation, lest the present deputation sent by John might weaken in their minds the testimony which he had formerly given in his favour. Jesus therefore pronounced a public eulogium of his precursor, both on account of his own eminent virtues and the high quality of his employment. His virtues were, first, an unshaken firmness of mind, which did not dispose him to retract the high testimonies he had borne in his favour; and, secondly, a wonderful austerity of life. As to the first, Jesus asked his hearers: "What went you out into the desert to see? a

reed shaken with the wind?" In other words, was he a person of a fickle, irresolute temper, one who varied his opinion with the times? The contrary was clearly established by the actual situation of John at the moment when Jesus was speaking. The unshaken firmness of his mind had brought upon him the persecution which he now suffered from the tyranny of Herod, whose incestuous marriage he could not be induced to approve. Jesus goes on thus to inquire of them: "But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are in costly apparel, and live delicately, are" not like John in the wilderness, but "in the houses of kings." Jesus next proceeds to consider the high office of St. John as his precursor. "But what went you out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. Amen, I say to you, there has not risen among them that are born of woman a greater than John the Baptist." This comparison, as appears from St. Luke, is solely made betwixt him and the ancient prophets, and signifies that John, as the immediate precursor of the Messiah, was equal, if not superior, to any of them. But Jesus adds, speaking of himself in the third person: "Yet he that is lesser" than John, and as it were his junior, "in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." This is what John himself had acknowledged at two different times. *He that shall come after me, is preferred before me.* [John i. 15.] Jesus then proceeds as follows: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and those that use violence bear it away." Whereas, before his time, and during the whole period of the prophets, heaven was shut, now it is open, and since the time of John's preaching repentance, it is offered to all men who will do violence to themselves by the mortification of their passions. Now, therefore, is the time appointed for the accomplishment of the prophecies. "For all the pro-

phets and the law only prophesied until John ;” that is, they only promised at a distance the good things which were to come : but since John’s mission, these prophetic promises begin to be fulfilled : he has announced the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, and has pointed out Jesus, who is the King and Lord of it. “ And if you will receive it,” and will attentively consider the rigour of John’s penance, the fervour of his zeal, the force of his preaching, and all the other circumstances of his life, “ you will acknowledge that he is Elias that is to come,” in order to announce the first coming of the Messiah, and to prepare mankind for his reception. And as the quality here ascribed to St. John is merely allegorical, inasmuch as he is the figure or image of the real Elias, whose coming at the end of the world is foretold by Malachi, Jesus adds : “ he that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and understand this mystical language. “ And all the people ” in general, “ and the Publicans hearing, praised the justice of God, being baptised with John’s baptism ;” that is, they admired the wonderful conduct of the Almighty in appointing a precursor or forerunner before the first, as well as before the last coming of the Messiah, purposely to prepare mankind for those great events, and to render them more fit to receive him by means of a sincere repentance. “ But the Pharisees and the doctors of the law despised the designs of God toward themselves, not being baptised by him. And the Lord said : whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation ? and to whom are they like ? They are like to children sitting in the market-place, who calling out to their companions ” that were averse to join with them in their various games and pastimes, taxed them with ill-nature, saying : “ we have piped to you, and you have not danced ; we have lamented, and you have not mourned.” This appears to have been a proverb among children at that time, and to have been taken from them ; and nothing can be more apposite than the application of it by Christ in the present instance. “ For John the Baptist,” says he, “ came

neither eating bread nor drinking wine: and you say he hath a devil. The son of man is come eating and drinking," as others; "and you say: behold a man that is a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners. And" yet, in this severity of John's manners, and in this humane condescension of Jesus Christ, the "wisdom" of God "is justified" or approved and acknowledged to be equitable "by all her children," that is by all those who are truly wise and disposed to see and receive truth; while others remain obstinate in their blindness, and refuse to believe in Christ. To the truly wise it will appear the effect of an all-wise Providence, that the forerunner of Jesus should openly profess the practice of an extraordinary austerity, in order to give a greater sanction to that testimony he was to bear, and to render it perfectly unexceptionable. It will equally appear to be a wise appointment of the same Providence, that Jesus should lead a life by no means extraordinarily rigid, in order thereby to attract mankind to his service. "Then," taking occasion, from this impenitence of the Pharisees, "he began to reproach the cities" of Galilee, "in which a great many of his miracles were wrought, because they had not done penance," but were shamefully ungrateful for all his favours. To Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum, he in particular denounced the greatest of woes in the following terms. "Wo to thee Corozain, wo to thee Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that had been wrought in you," though Pagan cities, "they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou Capharnaum, shalt thou," by thy riches and luxury, "be exalted up to the very sky?" No, "thou shalt go down even unto hell; for if the miracles had been done in Sodom that have been wrought in thee," however infamous for its abominations, "it might have remained" entire "even until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more

tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

From hence we may learn how dangerous it is to resist the divine graces, and to abuse those favourable opportunities which Providence affords us of improving ourselves in virtue and of securing our eternal salvation.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MARY MAGDALEN ANOINTS THE FEET OF JESUS. LUKE VII.
36—50.

WHILST Jesus was yet in Galilee, and probably at Naim, where he lately had raised to life the widow's son, he was invited to dinner by a certain Pharisee called Simon, who seems to have lived in the same town, or some neighbouring city, as Calmet shows. Our Lord was pleased to accept this invitation to confound the pride of the Pharisees, and chiefly that he might manifest the power of his grace in the wonderful conversion of an abandoned woman, who has ever since been considered as a most encouraging example and model of true penitence to all succeeding generations. St. Luke gives us the following account of this illustrious penitent. "A certain Pharisee desired Jesus that he would eat with him; and being entered into the Pharisee's house, he was at table. And behold a woman who was in the city, a sinner, as soon as she knew that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with ointment."

Behold here, in the conduct of Magdalen, the perfect model of a true penitent. From her heart she detested the past irregularities of her life; she was penetrated with shame and confusion for them, and placing herself behind Jesus, prostrate on the ground at his feet, she judged herself

unworthy of appearing before him. She expressed her sorrow for her past crimes, and made a kind of public confession of them, by shedding abundance of tears, which flowed from a contrite heart. She does the utmost to satisfy for them, and now defaces or consecrates to penance whatever had formerly been an instrument of sin: her eyes, which had been full of dangerous charms, are now converted into fountains of tears to cleanse the stains of her soul. Her hair, once dressed in tresses and curls to ensnare souls, now hangs loose and dishevelled, and serves for a towel to wipe our Lord's feet. She kisses his feet as a public declaration of that chaste and holy love which now burned within her, as likewise to draw down upon her the grace of reconciliation, which the Scripture calls the kiss of peace. Lastly, she pours out upon the feet of Jesus the vessel of sweet perfumes, the odour of which quickly spread through the whole room, intimating hereby her firm intention of being as careful for the future to spread abroad the sweet odour of her virtues, as she had hitherto been intent upon the destruction of souls by her scandalous life. Moreover, by thus affectionately pouring out her perfumes, formerly the incentives of vice, she makes an offering as it were of her worldly goods, and showed the future use she meant to apply them to, viz. the relief of the poor, here represented by the feet of Jesus.

Let us now see the reception which this humble penitent met with from our Redeemer. He had himself inspired her with these just dispositions, and was come to the Pharisee's banquet, exulting with holy joy, from the foreknowledge he had of her conversion: for the main spring of all he did and suffered on earth was an insatiable thirst for the salvation of sinners. But "the Pharisee, who had invited him, seeing it, said within himself: this man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner," and consequently he would not allow her to approach him in this manner. It was pride that betrayed the Pharisee on this

occasion into rash judgment, and made him condemn as a grievous sinner one who was truly penitent. The same unhappy pride made him likewise blasphemously censure the goodness and mercy of our Redeemer. "And Jesus," in his own defence, meekly spoke the following parable; and "said to him: Simon, I have something to say to thee: he replied; speak, Master. There were two debtors to a certain creditor; the one owed him 500 *Roman* pence," about 9 pounds, "the other 50," or about 19 shillings, "and they having not wherewith to pay, he forgave both of them: which of them loved him more? Simon answered and said: I presume, he to whom he forgave more. And he said to him: thou hast judged rightly." Then Jesus showed that under the title of the usurer he had represented himself; because he in fact places out to each individual those graces and talents which he expects should be improved, and made to fructify, that he may receive the produce with usury. Under the names of the two debtors therefore he described the Pharisee and the woman in question, each under the proportional share of a debt for which they stood bound to his justice, and consequently as she, from the sins of her past life, laboured under a load of debt, ten times greater than he did, so her gratitude in loving God was so much the greater in proportion as more was forgiven her. "And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: dost thou see this woman," all bathed in tears? "I came into thy house, thou didst not give me water for my feet; but she hath watered my feet with tears, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Thou hast not anointed my head with oil; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say to thee: many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much: but that person to whom less is forgiven, loveth less. And he said to her: thy sins are forgiven thee." And they who were at the table together, began to say within themselves: who is this that even

forgiveth sins ? And he said to the woman : thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace.” Mercy is the property and the favourite attribute of our divine Redeemer. Hence he assures this humble sinner that her offences were cancelled, and that her lively faith, animated by ardent charity, which drew from her eyes tears of repentance, had saved her, and ensured to her that solid and happy peace which is the fruit of true repentance. The same motive of gratitude by which Magdalen was actuated for the grace of her conversion, ought to have no less weight with those who, by God’s singular grace have always preserved their innocence. For whether God shows mercy by pardoning sins or by preventing them in us, we are totally indebted to him for the grace which we receive.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

JESUS HEALS A POSSESSED PERSON WHO WAS BLIND AND DUMB.

MATT. XII. 22—45. MARK III. 20—30. LUKE XI. 14—26.

“AND Jesus and his disciples came to a house,” which was probably Peter’s, at Capharnaum, “and the multitude cometh together again” to hear the word of salvation, “so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his own people,” who probably were his cousins or citizens from Nazareth who did not believe in him, “had heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him : for they said ; he is gone mad.” It is not however certain who said this, whether his friends or enemies ; if the latter, perhaps the Scribes and Pharisees might call him a madman, because he blamed their vices, and preached with such extraordinary zeal : if it be referred to his friends, they might endeavour to lay hold on him, to extricate him from the troublesome importunity of the crowd, not as if Jesus had lost his reason, but as if

in danger of fainting for want of food, and the close suffocating air that was occasioned by the great concourse of people. "Then was offered to him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he cast out the devil and healed him, so that he spoke and saw. And all the multitude were amazed and said: is not this the Son of David," and the Messiah who is to be born of his race? "But the Pharisees hearing it said: this man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And the Scribes who were come down from Jerusalem said: he hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils. And others tempting asked him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, after he had called them together, he said to them in parables" refuting these their blasphemous calumnies, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. How then can Satan cast out Satan? And if Satan cast out Satan" by my ministry, as you pretend, "he is divided against himself; and if Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" Since "if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. If Satan then be risen up against himself, he is divided and cannot stand, but is brought to an end. How then shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?" You will undoubtedly answer by the spirit of God. "Therefore they shall be your judges," and condemn you for attributing to the devil in my regard, what in them you acknowledge to come from the spirit of God. "Now if I by the finger of God," that is, "by the spirit of God, cast out devils," as you would allow, were you but impartial, "then is the kingdom of God" announced and "come upon you;" since it is for the establishing this truth that I have performed all these miracles, whereof you have been witnesses.

The Pharisees urged against Jesus, that the devils drove out each other when he gave the word of command; and this they pretended was done by a sort of collusion amongst themselves, in order, by this artful manœuvre, to ensure to him esteem and credit amongst mankind. But our Lord shows clearly, that the idea of such a collusion is in the present instance futile in the extreme, by the high tone of authority whereby he enforces their obedience to his commands. They disputed, if one may be allowed the expression, every inch of ground with him, unwilling to quit their hold without absolute and irresistible compulsion. Jesus explains this by the comparison of an armed man who continues in possession of his stronghold, till he be overcome by another of superior force. "And how can any one enter into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? and then he shall plunder his house." For "when a strong man," and "armed, guardeth his court, the things of which he is possessed are safe. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and distribute his spoils."

Under this figure is represented the war which Jesus continually wages with his enemy the devil, here denominated the strong man. The hold or fortress possessed by the devil is each soul that is enslaved to him by sin: over every such soul he enjoys a peaceable and undisturbed possession, so long as no resistance is made against him. The spoils and trophies which he has acquired over these unhappy victims refer to the victories which he had gained over their wills by their inordinate self-love, over their minds by the illusion of error, over their hearts by all the passions of concupiscence, and over their senses by the attractions of pleasure. The other armed man stronger than the former, and by whom he is overthrown, is Jesus Christ. Jesus throws his enemy to the ground and disarms him, by banishing or defeating all his temptations, by changing in the sinner a

taste for pleasures and diversions into a salutary fear of God and a sorrow for the past sins, and by breaking asunder the bonds of long contracted habits of vice. Lastly, he divides his spoils by reducing once more to order the several powers and senses of man ; for he brings him to submit his mind to God by faith, his will to the influence of divine grace, his heart to the guidance of the superior will, his passions to reason, and each power to that particular virtue by which it ought to be directed. But how is all this to be effected, unless he enters into the house of the strong one, viz. into the soul of him who is a slave to the devils, in order thus to bind him fast in chains ? Now this he performs before their eyes, when he expels the devil from the bodies and souls of possessed persons, since he delivers none of these corporally, without at the same time spiritually converting them to God.

Jesus Christ next proceeds to inform his followers, that in this warfare with the devil no neutrality is allowed, but that each one must either espouse his party or that of his adversary. "He that is not with me," says Christ, "is against me : and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." But the Pharisees he accuses not only of refusing to labour with him, but even of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, by their attributing to the devil those miracles which he evidently wrought by the Spirit of God. This is impugning the known truth, which certainly was the greatest of crimes, as Christ shows in the following words. "Therefore I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme : but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him : but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come. But he shall be guilty of an everlasting sin," and this "because they said : he hath an unclean spirit." In this blasphemy of the Pharisees, who affirmed that Christ was actuated by an impure spirit, and

by that means worked miracles, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost were both equally concerned. It seems, however, that Jesus was willing to forgive that share of the crime which regarded himself, because it seemed more excusable in them to entertain these unjust sentiments in regard to a man whom they often saw conversing with sinners; but that part of the crime which is directed against the Holy Ghost, and which can only be the effect of a voluntary blindness and a consummate malice, he represents as irremissible, and beyond the reach of pardon. This is one of the most obscure passages in the scripture, meaning either, according to St. Chrysostom, that the sin spoken of shall *scarce* or seldom be forgiven, or, according to St. Austin, that it is the sin of *final impenitence*.

The Pharisees, through the inveteracy of their rancour against Jesus, condemned his person whilst they were forced to approve his beneficent works which were done in favour of the sick and infirm. He wishes them therefore not to make a separate cause between the tree and the fruit, but to own the tree to be good, since they avow the fruit to be so; or otherwise to say the fruit is evil, if they will maintain the tree is bad. "Either make the tree good," says he, "and its fruit good; or make the tree evil, and its fruit evil. For by the fruit the tree is known." But why be surprised at your ill-founded censures and blasphemies; "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, whereas you are evil? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." In effect, "a good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment:" and how much more shall you for your calumnies and blasphemies against me? "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Then some of the Scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying: Master, we

would see a sign from thee," and some extraordinary miracle which may ascertain that thou art sent by God and actest by his spirit. "And as the multitude flocked together, he said to them: This generation is a wicked generation: an evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights," and then come forth full of life. "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of man also be to this generation." In effect, there never was wrought a miracle either more divine or more inimitable, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and this was notified to the Jews in a manner neither to be suspected nor objected to: and yet it made no greater impression on this infidel nation than the other miracles he had already performed in their presence. Hence he says: "The men of Nineve shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas," a person foreign to them; who without working miracles in their sight, came to announce an event equally unwelcome and improbable, viz. the entire ruin and destruction of their city; yet they listened to his admonition and did penance for their sins: "And behold a greater than Jonas is here," and they will not hearken to him. "The Queen of the South shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because she," though invested with the government of an extensive empire, "came from the ends of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here," and yet they despise his words. Jesus now denounces against the Pharisees the dreadful judgment that actually hangs over their heads in punishment of their ingratitude and unbelief; and this he does under the figure of the possessed person whom he had recently delivered. "When," by means of baptism, or the sacrament of penance, "an unclean spirit is gone out of a

man," to make room for the grace of God, "he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and he findeth none," because he maketh it to consist in the ruin of souls dear to God. "Then saith he: I will return into my house from whence I came out: and coming he findeth it empty" and void of those passions he had excited there; "swept" and cleansed from its former filth of sin; "and garnished" with the graces of the Holy Ghost. "Then," finding himself not sufficiently strong to enter into a place so well fortified, "he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is made worse than the first," both by the greater number of spirits that get possession, and by their particular care to maintain their hold. Now so shall it be to this most wicked race of people, and to obdurate and impenitent sinners, who, after receiving innumerable graces from God, and most ungratefully abusing them, shall be delivered up to the devil, to be eternally possessed by him.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE EXCLAMATION OF A WOMAN CONCERNING JESUS—HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN DESIRE TO SEE HIM. MATT. XII. 46—50. MARK III. 31—35. LUKE XI. 27, AND VIII. 19—21.

THIS chapter contains, 1. The praises to the Blessed Virgin Mary, with reference to her divine Son. 2. Her tender care for his health. 3. The communication of her maternity to the faithful.

"And it came to pass as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice," in raptures of admiration at his doctrine, and regardless of the displeasures of the Pharisees, "said to him: blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breast that gave thee suck"

(Luke xi. 27). This was a high encomium publicly bestowed upon the mother of Jesus, and which chiefly redounded upon him who was the subject and occasion of it; for it is not probable she could have in view the mystery of the incarnation, which was at that period unknown even to the Apostles themselves.

Jesus, pleased with this instance of fortitude in a woman, who alone seemed to side with him against the Pharisees, ensured to her in return a share of that happiness which she apparently envied in his mother. Since she would undoubtedly have esteemed herself most happy to have been the mother of such a son as he was, he now assured her she might become still more happy than if he were her son, because those above all others are to be deemed happy who, like her, heard the word of God and religiously observed it. "But he said: yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." This sentence by no means derogates from that inestimable happiness which the Blessed Virgin Mary enjoys as the mother of God, and which, as she herself foretold, is acknowledged by all the nations of the earth. Still less does it imply that the Blessed Virgin did not carefully observe and fulfil the word of God. It precisely compares the happiness of her maternity to a different kind of happiness, still more important, which was then proposed to mankind, and which Mary likewise possessed more fully than any other creature. "As he was yet speaking to the multitudes" on this subject, "behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And they could not come at him for the crowd: and, standing without, they sent in to call him, and the multitudes sat about him, and it was told him: behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee," and "desiring to see thee. And, answering them, he said: who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on those that sat about him, and stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said: behold my

mother and my brethren : for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother : My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God and comply with it." It may be presumed, though not mentioned by the Evangelists, that after this speech Jesus followed his holy mother and his brethren, according to their desire.

By the words here spoken, Jesus meant not to disown or to express any disregard towards his mother and his brethren, as if they had given him any cause of displeasure, by appearing in their poor and humble state before so numerous a meeting ; neither does he complain of being unseasonably interrupted. He is far from checking them as having brought themselves forward to the public view, in the light of persons connected with so great a man : nor does he give any sharp answer to him who had mentioned their being at the door. In the common language of the world, the mother of Jesus is she who conceived and bore him in her womb, and in this sense he has no brothers. But in a spiritual and divine sense, the mother of Jesus is that soul which conceives him by hearing the word of God, and which brings him forth by the practice of all manner of good works. In this sense he has as many brothers and sisters as there are individuals of the faithful who partake of that same spirit, whereof he possesses the fulness, and who are to share with him the same heavenly inheritance. Thus, when Jesus Christ asks who is his mother, and who are his brethren, he speaks not as the Son of man, but as the Son of God, and as the word of his eternal Father.

CHAPTER L.

DIFFERENT PARABLES ARE PROPOSED BY OUR LORD. MATT. XIII. 1—52. MARK IV. 1—34. LUKE VIII. 1—18, AND XIII. 18—21.

“AND when the same day,” in the afternoon at Capharnaum, “a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto him, Jesus going out of the house,” where he had been taking some refreshment, “sat by the sea side. And again he began to teach, and great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went up into a boat,” in order to be more easily heard by them, “and there sat,” whilst “all the people was about the sea side, on the land. And he taught them many things,” concerning the kingdom of heaven, “in parables.”

All the eight following parables were spoken by Jesus on the same day, but the five first were addressed only to the people assembled on the sea-shore; the other three were added by him when alone with the apostles in the house, and are in some measure explanations of the preceding ones. “Wherefore Jesus said unto them in his doctrine,” as follows: “Hear ye; behold the sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the road side, and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air came and eat it up; and other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and when the sun was risen, it was scorched, because it had no moisture,” and hence “it withered away; and other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it, and it yielded no fruit: and some fell upon good ground, and brought forth fruit, that grew up and increased” to maturity, “and yielded one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred” fold. “Saying these things, he cried out: he that hath ears to hear, let him hear;” that is, he who has received from God a spirit of understanding and docility, let him profit of what is here said.

This parable shows the various obstacles which render fruitless the word of God in those that hear it, and the happy effect it produces in others, according to their various dispositions. "Another parable he proposed to them," to explain how heresies spring up from a corruption of the true faith, "saying: the kingdom of heaven," that is, the Church of Christ, "is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: an enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: no, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into the barn."

Jesus added a third parable, to represent to his hearers, that the word of God fails not to fructify, independently of the preacher, and that its progress is certain, although imperceptible to the outward eye. "And he said: so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, whilst he knoweth not how. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

The fourth parable represents the astonishing progress of the evangelical doctrine, which in a short space of time spread throughout the whole globe, in spite of all the powers of earth and hell combined against it. "Another parable he proposed to them, saying: to what shall we liken the king-

dom of God ? or to what parable shall we compare it ? The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which is the least indeed of all seeds that are in the earth ; and when it has been sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all the herbs, and becometh a tree, and shooteth out great branches ; so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable," being the fifth, " he spoke to them," as a further representation of the same wonderful fruitfulness of the Gospel : " The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes," and the subjects of them he drew from various things most familiar to their usual habits of life. " And with many such parables he spoke to them the word " of God, " according as they were able to hear ; and without parables he did not speak unto them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, (Ps. lxxviii. 2) saying : I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter all things hidden from the foundation of the world." But, apart, he explained all things to his disciples," as we shall see in the sequel.

CHAPTER LI.

THE PARABLES OF THE SOWER AND OF THE TARES EXPLAINED.

MATT. XIII. 10—43. MARK IV. 10—26. LUKE VIII. 9—15.—OTHER PARABLES ARE PROPOSED. MATT. XIII. 44—52.

" THEN having sent away the multitudes, he came into the house ; and when he was alone, the twelve that were with him asked him : why speakest thou to them in parables ? Who answered and said to them : because to you," who believe in me, " it is given to know the mysteries of the

kingdom of heaven, but to them " who are incredulous, and who harden their hearts, this favour " is not given. " For he that hath " already, " to him shall be given " more, " and he shall abound : but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables : because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand," as they might and ought ; but shut their eyes against the lights that are offered them. Wherefore, " to you," my disciples, " it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God ;" that is, the secret doctrines relating to the Gospel-kingdom, " but to the rest, that are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand : lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." (Isa. vi. 9). By these words it clearly appears that the Jews were the cause of their own blindness, and had, by their obstinacy, rendered themselves unworthy of particular lights from God. " But " in respect to the Apostles, the case was very different, and Jesus felicitates them on their singular happiness of being his disciples : " blessed are your eyes," says he, " because they see " my actions, my miracles, and my whole life, " and your ears, because they hear " my heavenly doctrine. " For amen, I say to you : many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And his disciples " further " asked him what this parable might be. And he said to them," with apparent surprise : " are you ignorant of this parable ? and how shall you know all " the other " parables," which are still more difficult ? " Hear you, therefore, the parable of the sower. The seed is the word of God. The sower is he that soweth the word," by preaching and instruction ; and this seed falleth upon four different kinds of soil, which represent four different sorts of persons. The first are such as continue obdurate in vice : the second are such

as are unsteady and inconstant in their good resolutions: the third such as are absorbed in the cares and pleasures of this life: the fourth such as have every proper disposition for receiving the word of God with fruit.

Christ now proceeds to describe the characters of these four different sorts of persons in relation to the subject in question. Of the first, he says: "These are they by the way side, where the word of the kingdom is sown, and as soon as they have heard" it, "immediately cometh the wicked one, Satan, and catcheth, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts, lest believing they should be saved." Wherefore they here are represented by the *high-way*, whose heart, by long habits of vice, is hardened like a beaten path, without being broken and ploughed up, as it were, by remorse or repentance for their sins. When souls of this description hear the divine word, the evil spirit, like a bird of prey, presently makes his attack upon them, and drawing their attention to the former objects of their passions, robs them of the words of life which had been sown in their hearts, lest by ruminating upon them, and giving them time to make a due impression, they should think seriously of a change, and break loose from the fetters of their vicious habits.

Christ next tells his disciples, who are represented by the rocky or stony ground. "And these likewise are they," says he, "that are sown on the stony ground, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy," and, as a proof of their earnestness, form a thousand good resolutions, and even perform some good works, which are analogous of the first appearance of the growing corn. But unfortunately, "they have no root in themselves, and when tribulation and persecution arise on the account of the word, they are presently scandalised. For they believe for a while, and in time of temptation, they fall away." This temptation or persecution is to them as a scorching sun, which parches up and consumes all the moisture of their sprouting virtue;

their courage and resolution fail them in the time of difficulty; their devotion is at an end, and they no longer choose, at this price, to follow the maxims of their divine Master. "And others there are," says Christ, speaking of the third sort, "who are sown among thorns: these are they that hear the word" with a heart tolerably prepared; "but the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, and the lust after other things, entering in, choke the word," as so many thorns and briars; "and" thus "it is made fruitless; for the soul divided among so many vain or trifling objects, becomes unable to attend seriously to christian duties, and so forfeits that fruitfulness of virtue with which she would otherwise have been blessed. Thus all the obstacles which destroy the fruit of God's word in the soul of man may be reduced to hardness of heart, an inconstancy of mind, and a dissipation of the soul, incompatible with a virtuous life. But let us now see who are represented by the good soil, which produces fruit even to a hundred-fold: for this is an emblem of what we should all endeavour to be. "These are they," says Christ, "who are sown upon good ground, who, in a good and very good heart," that is, in a heart softened by grace, ploughed up and harrowed by penance, cleansed from the noxious weeds of irregular passions and idle amusements, "hearing the word, receive it, keep it," by allowing it to sink deep in their hearts, "and bring forth fruit in patience," some in greater, some in smaller quantity, according to their respective progress in virtue; "the one an hundred-fold, and another sixty, and another thirty."

"His disciples" having been thus fully instructed as to the meaning of the parable of the sower, "came to him, saying: Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. Who made answer and said to them: He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man," *i. e.* Jesus Christ himself, who during the course of his mortal life, preached the doctrine of truth, which is the seed of eternal life: "and the field is the world:

and the good seed are the children of the kingdom" of heaven, because the doctrine of truth reduced to practice, is what makes saints: "and the cockle are the children of the wicked *one*; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil," who, whilst pastors are lulled asleep, spread the tares of error and sin amongst a great number of Christians. These falling from the state of grace, or becoming heretics, are yet mingled with the rest of the faithful in the same outward profession of Christianity, in like manner as the good corn and the cockle are mingled together in the same field. As therefore the good seed is the true doctrine of the gospel, the cockle seems to represent more properly the errors of heretics than the vices of wicked Christians. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels, who ask permission to extirpate the wicked even in this life: but since this extermination was not to be effected by supernatural scourges, but by natural and general means of destruction, which affect the good indiscriminately with the wicked, therefore Jesus withholds his consent to this severe but merited punishment, lest the virtuous should be involved in the same evil with the wicked. On the contrary, he thinks fit to allow the good corn and the weeds to grow up together, viz. the faithful and heretics, the good and the bad, to live together until the harvest time, which will be at the general resurrection; and this he does in order to exercise the patience of the faithful, and to give the wicked full leisure to repent. At that period the angels, here represented by the reapers, will make a due separation. "Even as cockle therefore is gathered up, and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandal and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and be convinced that there is nothing which he ought not willingly to do in order to avoid those

eternal flames, and to obtain this heavenly kingdom. Our blessed Saviour does not seem to have explained the third, fourth, and fifth parables in a similar manner as the two former.

It is probable that the three ensuing parables were spoken by Christ to his apostles in the house, immediately after his having explained the parable of the cockle weed. For St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to have concluded the parables addressed to the multitude by those words, "*and without parables he did not speak to them.*"

The sixth and seventh parables represent the inestimable value of the doctrine of the gospel, under the figure of a treasure hidden in a field, and of a pearl of great worth hidden at the bottom of the sea. "The kingdom of heaven," said Christ, "is like unto a treasure hidden in a field, which a man having found, hid it" again in a secure place, "and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth the field." In like manner he who, by the doctrine of the gospel, has found out the kingdom of heaven, ought to be willing to sell all his temporal goods, and to give even his very life, rather than let slip this fortunate purchase which is to secure to him eternal joys hereafter. For "again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." Wherefore do you buy in like manner, even at the expense of all that you possess, that eternal kingdom which faith discovers to you, but which you cannot obtain without the practice of good works. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together all kinds of fishes. Which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth."

The eighth parable represents to us this important truth, that it suffices not to salvation to profess the true faith and the doctrine of the gospel, unless we regulate our lives by its

precepts. The sea represents the world, the fishing is the preaching of the gospel, the net is the Church, the fish of all sorts caught in the net are good and bad men of all nations, who enter into the Church. When the net is full, it is drawn upon the shore, where its contents are examined: "So shall it be" with the Church "at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from amongst the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have ye understood all these things?" said Jesus to them. "They say to him, yes. He said unto them," intimating that these his instructions were not meant solely for themselves, but for the good of others, "therefore every Scribe instructed in the" laws of the "kingdom of heaven, is like to a man who is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old," and distributes them to his children according to their several wants: so also a pastor of souls, well versed in the heavenly science of salvation, unfolds to his flock the spiritual treasures of faith, according to their capacity; throwing light upon the mysteries of the New Testament by the figures of the Old, and displaying the novel truths of grace, by pointing out their analogy with the ordinary works of nature.

CHAPTER LII.

JESUS PREACHES AT NAZARETH. MATT. XIII. 53—59. MARK VI. 1—5. LUKE IV. 16—30.

"AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he passed from thence;" that is, from Capharnaum and the adjoining places, "and came to Nazareth, his own country, where he was brought up; and his disciples followed him." He had delayed his journey purposely to allow the fame he had acquired by so many miracles to reach that

place before him, in order to ensure to his doctrine a more favourable reception amongst his countrymen. "And he went into the synagogue, according to his custom, on the Sabbath-day, and he rose up (Isa. lxii.) to read," as was usual with those who had anything to impart to the audience. "And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto him: and as he unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written" concerning his own divine mission and employment. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he hath anointed me" by the unction of the Holy Ghost "as by a holy balsam: he hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor," rather than to the rich, who are generally less disposed to receive it, being too much attached to earthly objects, and "to heal the contrite of heart" of their deep and deadly wounds occasioned by sin: "to preach deliverance to the captives," groaning under the slavery of the devil, "and sight to the blind," hitherto plunged in the darkness of ignorance and error; "to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," as a general jubilee, wherein God is pleased, out of his pure mercy, to remit to mankind their debts, and to release them from the slavery of sin, by reinstating them in their former liberty of the children of God; "and the day of retribution," when God shall render to every one according to his works, and be revenged of all his enemies. "And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister and sat down; and the eyes of all the synagogue were fixed upon him," eagerly expecting he would explain these words. "And he began to teach" and "to say to them: this day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears," alluding not merely to the action he was engaged in, but to everything he had done since the commencement of his ministry. "And many hearing him were" at first "in admiration at his doctrine, and all gave testimony to him, and wondered at the word of grace that proceeded from his mouth." But these flattering testimonies, which the force of truth drew from their mouths, were quickly

succeeded by a spirit of envy which yet lurked within their breasts. Hence murmuring to each other, "they said: how came this man by this wisdom and miracles? how came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands?" They then began to sum up every particular circumstance of his life which might any ways tend to lessen him in the esteem of the public. "Is not this," said they, "the carpenter? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not this the son of Joseph? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude; and his sisters," that is, his cousins, "are they not all with us? Whence therefore hath he all these things? And they were scandalised in his regard," the meanness of his temporal birth preventing them from acknowledging his divine greatness. Hence they wished him, for the clearing up of their doubts, to perform in their presence some of those wonderful works which public report stated him to have performed at Capharnaum. "But Jesus said to them," anticipating the request they were about to make: "Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician heal thyself: as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country." But he declined giving them this satisfaction: "and he said: Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted of in his own country. A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred." Wherefore, as miracles are to be wrought with a view to the conversion of souls, a prophet will be less inclined to work them in his native place, where they are less attended to, than in distant parts, where there is a better prospect of success.

A second reason assigned by Christ for this his refusal is drawn from the usual conduct of Providence. A prophet sent by God for the benefit of mankind follows not, in the exercise of his high employment, the bent of his own inclinations or views: he seeks not to draw from the talent intrusted to

him a subject of applause or any return of gratitude to himself: he goes whithersoever God sends him, even into the most distant regions, and his scene of action is precisely where Providence marks it out to him. In proof of these Jesus quotes two instances in the Old Testament, the one of Elias, the other of Eliseus. "In truth, I say to you, there were many" indigent "widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth (3 Kings xvii. 9); and to none of them was Elias sent but to Sarepta," a small village in the country "of Sidon, to a widow woman," that he might bestow on this stranger, in preference to his own countrymen, the necessary succours of which she stood in need. "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian," and a Gentile.

From these two examples he left them to infer, that if in the distribution of miracles the Almighty had here given the preference to such persons as were strangers and Gentiles, rather than to his own people, they should not wonder that he had fixed his residence at Capharnaum, a city indeed with which he had no previous connection, but to which God had directed him rather than to Nazareth, although the latter were more properly his own country. "And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things," and knowing he meant by these examples to reproach them with their incredulity, "were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city; and they brought him to the top of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he," compassionating their blindness, prevented so horrid a deed, and "passing through the midst of them, went his way," either by making himself invisible, or by striking them with a stupor, which affected their senses to such a degree, that they no longer knew what they did. "And he could not" be induced to "do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were

sick, laying his hands upon them : and he wondered because of their unbelief.”

CHAPTER LIII.

THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. MATT. XIV. 6—12.
MARK VI. 21—29.

ST. JOHN had been now imprisoned at Macheron about a year, at the solicitation of Herodias, and would probably before this have fallen a sacrifice to her vindictive cruelty, had it not been for the personal respect which Herod entertained for him, and the great holiness of his life. These in some measure counterbalanced, in the mind of that prince, the efforts of this wicked woman, who insatiably thirsted after his blood. At length, however, an opportunity offered itself which completely answered her wishes. This was the festivity of Herod's birthday, which gave occasion for the death of St. John, as related by the Evangelists, in the following manner. “And when a convenient day was come,” for the design of Herodias, to wit, “Herod's birthday, Herod made a supper for the princes and tribunes, and chief men of Galilee.” Herein he conformed to a custom established by the Pagans, who not extending their hopes beyond this life (where they placed all their happiness), usually celebrated the anniversary of their entrance into the world with the greatest profusion and conviviality. “And when” Salome, “the daughter of the same Herodias,” and Philip, “had come in” to the banqueting room, “and had danced, and pleased Herod and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel : ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it to thee. And he swore to her : whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom. Who,” judging herself unequal, through her age, to give a proper answer to so unlimited an offer, ran in haste, and “when she was gone out, said to her mother,

what shall I ask? But she," glad of so favourable an opportunity of compassing the death of him whom she had so long viewed as her greatest enemy, "said" to her daughter, without the least hesitation; ask for "the head of John the Baptist. Who when she was returned immediately with haste to the king," in order not to lose the present moment of her favour with him, "she asked, saying: I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad" at so extraordinary a request, and, it seems, even hesitated for a short time what to do; "yet, because of his" inconsiderate "oath, and because of them that were with him at table," who espoused her cause, "he would not displease her. But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish. And he beheaded him in the prison," without allowing him so much as the formality of a trial: "and brought his head in a dish, and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother," who, as St. Jerome relates, made it her pastime to pierce the sacred tongue with a bodkin, as Fulvia did Cicero's. Thus the birthday festival of Herod Antipas was stained with the blood of him, than whom, according to truth itself, a greater had not risen among those born of women; and his head was made the reward of a young girl's ability in dancing: but to John himself this scene was the festival of his birth to a happy eternity, and the loss of his life was rewarded by an eternal crown of glory. This happened about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, about the time of the paschal solemnity, a year before the death of our Blessed Redeemer, "which his disciples hearing, came, and took his body, and laid it in a tomb, and came and told Jesus" the melancholy event.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SECOND JOURNEY OF JESUS INTO GALILEE.—HIS COMMISSION AND CHARGE TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES. MATT. X. MARK VI. 7—13. LUKE IX. 1—6.

THE Evangelists relate two distinct missions for the propagation of the gospel: the first was performed by Jesus in person; the second by his twelve Apostles. “And it came to pass,” after the decollation of John the Baptist, that “Jesus went about all the cities and towns” of Galilee, “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity” (Matt. ix. 35), thus to establish the truth of his doctrines. It is probable that he embraced the opportunity of St. John’s martyrdom to add to the number of his own disciples all such as had been attached to the Precursor, as these were now, by their master’s death, left without a teacher. “And (Luke viii. 1—3) the twelve were with him,” in order that he might thus insure them by his example to the arduous duties of the apostleship, and teach them in what manner they were successfully to labour for the conversion of souls. “And certain women” likewise accompanied him, “who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities;” among whom were “Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth. And Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod’s steward, and Susanna and many others, who ministered unto him of their substance,” and defrayed the expenses unavoidable in his several journeys. Jesus was also followed by great crowds of people; “and seeing the multitudes” were eager to follow and listen to him, “he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and lying” along the road sides, “like sheep that have no shepherd. Then he saith to his disciples; the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest that he send forth

labourers into his harvest" (Matt. ix. 36—38). Then calling together the twelve Apostles," he gave them the necessary documents for their entering upon this harvest:

1. By investing them with fresh powers for that purpose.
2. By giving them proper directions for their making a due use thereof.

1. He invested them with a double power, viz. "he gave them power and authority over all devils; and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities." These miraculous powers were in some measure necessary for the success of their mission, in order to supply the deficiency of eloquence, riches, talents, and all other human means which were wanting to them. "And he began to send them two and two," arranged in proper order. "And the names of the twelve Apostles are these: the first Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, and James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent" into the different parts of the country "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." But in sending his Apostles as his ambassadors, Jesus delivered to them various instructions, such as were proper for their conduct not only in this instance, but in all their future missions; and which might serve likewise, in some degree, for all succeeding apostolic missionaries throughout the world. These instructions consist principally in precautions. 1. Against such obstacles as might impede the success of their preaching, 2. Against all anxiety respecting their future wants. 3. Against the persecutions which their preaching would draw down upon them.

The first obstacle to be guarded against was not to prejudice the Jews against the gospel, by preaching it to Gentiles and Samaritans. Wherefore Jesus sent the twelve, giving them these commands: "Go ye not into the way of the

Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The second obstacle of which they were to beware was avarice. Hence Christ enforces the contrary spirit of disinterestedness to so great an extent, as absolutely to debar his Apostles from every species of profit and indulgence which has the appearance of personal ease and convenience. "And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only," to walk with, "no scrip" for their provisions, "no bread, nor money in their purse. But to be shod with sandals" only, such as they then wore, "and that they should not put on two coats. And he said to them: Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses: nor scrip for your journeys, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff" to defend yourselves. In lieu of those conveniences place your trust in Providence. Receive no kind of acknowledgment for your labours. "And going preach, saying: the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." By these miracles, give proof that your mission is founded upon truth, and that your doctrine is from God. But, above all, as "you have received gratis, give gratis," because this divine power being the pure gift of God's grace, it is not to be acquired by any earthly bribe or human consideration, and it is no less than the highest indignity to act herein as in a temporal concern, or worldly transaction.

2. Jesus in the next place cautions his Apostles against all anxiety about their own wants and necessities. This advice was the more necessary, since, after an injunction of so perfect a disinterestedness, they might naturally ask how they were to subsist during their evangelical labours. This demand he anticipates by saying that they were entitled to a maintenance from those who reaped the benefit of their labours. "For the workman," said he, "is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy" to lodge you, lest otherwise the

sacredness of your character be any ways lessened in the eyes of the world by the unworthiness of the persons with whom you take up your abode. "And whatsoever house you shall enter into, abide there, and depart not from thence" without good reason, lest you incur the imputation of fickleness or of a blameable nicety. "And when you come into the house salute it, saying: peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you," and you will have this comfort, that you have discharged your duty. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet, for a testimony against them." Jesus adds, with a solemn asseveration: "Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. This declaration is grounded: 1. Upon the insult they offered to God by refusing to receive those whom he sends: 2. Upon the remorse and anguish they shall experience for having thus rejected the proffered means of salvation: 3. Upon the contempt with which they treated miracles, which are the voice of God and proofs of his doctrine; for these are the aggravations of guilt which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah stand not charged with.

3. Jesus forewarned his Apostles of the persecutions which they had to expect, and against which they were to arm themselves by meekness, prudence, simplicity, fortitude, and resignation. "Behold," says he, "I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." Jesus then proceeded to point out various occasions in which the practice of these virtues will be called for. 1. Prudence will be highly necessary to them in the various dangers to which they will be exposed from their necessary intercourse with mankind; wherefore he advises them to be ever upon their guard in the exercise of their functions. "But beware of men," says he, who are themselves those wolves into the midst of which I send you:

“For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and you shall be brought before governors and before kings for my sake,” in order to be “for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles” of the care I have taken to announce to them the doctrine of salvation, and of the obstinacy with which they have rejected it. “But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For” on these occasions, when my honour is at stake, and you are supporting my interests, “it is not” properly “you that speak, but” rather “the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you,” enlightening your minds and suggesting such words as are suitable to the occasion. But these are not the only trials you will have to undergo; for “the brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death.” Thus you will see your nearest relations become your greatest enemies. “And you shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake; but” amidst all these persecutions lose not courage, remembering the inestimable value of that eternal salvation which is to be gained by patient suffering, and that “he” only “that shall persevere to the end, shall be saved. And when they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another.” This conduct, which is directed by a principle of self-preservation, has indeed many advantages evident. Nor were they to fear lest places of refuge should be wanting to them. “Amen, I say to you, you shall not finish preaching through all the cities of Israel till the Son of man come” to execute vengeance on your persecutors.

2. With regard to the virtue of simplicity, Jesus shows how extremely useful this will be to his Apostles, in order to their readily submitting to the will of Providence, which permits these persecutions to befall them. Amongst the various reasons alleged for this purpose, the first is drawn from his own example. “The disciple is not above the

master, nor the servant above the Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub," the prince of devils, "how much more them of his household? Therefore fear them not:" all the evils they can make you suffer will only serve to render you more conformable to your divine Master, and more glorious before men; "for nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known," and therefore the justice of your cause, the innocence of your life, and the truth of your words, shall one day be made manifest in the sight of heaven and earth, and your adversaries be covered with confusion. "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light, and that which you hear in your ear, preach ye upon the house top," in order to convince mankind that it is the pure truth alone which you announce, and therefore it is in vain to calumniate the christian religion as a mystery of darkness and abomination. "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." Wherefore, under the absolute necessity of espousing the cause of God or that of the world, at open war with each other, we cannot hesitate what choice to make, seeing there is this essential or rather infinite difference between them, that the world can only kill the body, which is otherwise mortal and soon to die, whilst on the other hand God can punish both body and soul in eternal flames. Moreover, if you suffer anything for the sake of God, think not that your sufferings are unknown to him, or that they will go unrewarded. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But," as to you, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, better are you than many sparrows," and your heavenly Father will be far more attentive to all that concerns you. I will engage him myself to recompense you abundantly for all that you may do for me.

“Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.” As to the rest, “think not that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace,” such as carnal men desire, “but the sword,” and therefore this warfare in which my disciples will be engaged is no way contrary to the design I had in coming into the world. “I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies shall be they of his own household. He” therefore, “that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me,” either to bear my name, to be a member of my mystical body, or to partake of my rewards; “and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” Who but a God could utter this sublime language, such as had never been used before by any prophet or apostle? I say more, “he that taketh not up his cross and followeth me,” in my sufferings and death, “is not worthy of me.” This condition may appear hard to such as love this present life; but let them know, that “he that findeth his life” in this world at the expense of his faith, “shall lose it” for ever in the next: “and he that shall lose his life” in this world, “shall find it” again hereafter in a much greater degree of happiness and perfection for all eternity. But not only the Apostles are to be rewarded, but likewise all those who by their influence and concurrence shall contribute to the establishment of the gospel. Christ insinuates to his disciples that there shall always be found charitable persons who will afford them harbour and protection, and as an encouragement to such he declares that what is done to them is done to himself. “He that receiveth you,” says he, “receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet;

and he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name" and quality "of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." It is in vain therefore, says St. Jerome, for any one to dispense himself from giving alms, by alleging his poverty, since Christ here promises that the smallest benefaction or assistance bestowed on the indigent with a proper intention shall not go unrewarded. "And it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of giving these precepts to his twelve disciples," they departed agreeably to his orders, to announce the gospel, whilst "he himself passed from thence to teach and preach in their cities (Matt. xi. 1). And going out they went about through the" lesser "towns preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere. And they preached that men should do penance. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them," by this particular circumstance showing that they were inferior to their divine Master, who cured the infirm with a single word, or simply by his touch.

CHAPTER LV.

THE INCREASING REPUTATION OF JESUS, HIS RETREAT INTO THE DESERT, AND HIS MULTIPLICATION OF FIVE LOAVES.
MATT. XIV. 1, 2, 13—21. MARK VI. 14—16, 32—52.
LUKE IX. 7—17. JOHN VI. 5—14.

"AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard the fame of Jesus," and "of all things that were done by him; for his name was made manifest." That this prince had not sooner heard of Jesus, is to be attributed either to the usual indifference with which princes frequently listen to anything concerning religion and piety, or else to the unavoidable

occupations which engrossed his whole attention during the war he was then engaged in against Aretas his father-in-law. "And" Herod "was in a doubt" concerning this new prophet, who was now so much the subject of discourse in Galilee; and the more so, because his courtiers were divided into different opinions. For "it was said by some," probably of the Pharisees: "John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. By other some, that Elias hath appeared, and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again: but others" believed Jesus to be a new prophet, and "said: he is a prophet like one of the" ancient "prophets. Which Herod hearing, said: John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" And as tyrants easily believe that to be real which they are in dread of, he rather leaned to the opinion of those who judged the person in question to be John the Baptist risen again from the dead; especially as his conscience charged him with having put him to death unjustly. On this account he was not without apprehension lest God might now have invested him with sufficient powers to take full revenge for his cruelty against him: "and he therefore sought to see him," in order to ascertain by his features whether he were really the person. "And," in this state of uncertainty, "he said to his servants, this is John the Baptist whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. Which" apprehension of Herod, "when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence; not with the view of flying from him, since he returned *even the following day* to Capharnaum, but purposely that the news of his retreat might lessen the tyrant's fears, and at the same time afford to his disciples, now returned from their mission, a short respite from their labours, as insinuated by St. Mark and St. Luke. "And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they had done and taught. And he said to them: come apart into a desert place, and

rest a little: for there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat. And taking them, and going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart, which belongeth to Bethsaida: over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and they saw them going away, and many knew it: and they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. He therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near at hand," being the third since the commencement of our Saviour's public ministry. "And Jesus going out saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he received them" with kindness, "and began to teach them many things of the kingdom of God, and healed their sick, and them who were in need of healing. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him, saying: this is a desert place, and the hour is now past, send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat. But Jesus said to them: they have no need to go: give you them to eat. And they said to him," ironically: "let us go and buy bread for 200 pence," or about forty shillings, "and we will give them to eat:" this was probably said by Judas Iscariot. However, "when Jesus had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip," a good, kind, and compassionate man, "whence shall we buy bread that they may eat; and this he said to try him," whether in this emergency he would recur to his omnipotent Providence; "for he himself knew what he would do. Philip," however, had no such thought, but instantly "answered him: two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. But he saith to them: how many loaves have you? Go and see: and when they knew, one

of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him : there is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes ; but what are these amongst so many ? unless perhaps we should go and buy food for all this multitude. Now there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, bring them hither to me ; and he commanded them that they should make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass." For "there was much grass in the place ; and they did so ; and he made them all sit down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties," that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people more regularly served. "The men therefore sat down in number about five thousand. And" Jesus "taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and when he had given thanks, blessed them and broke the loaves, and distributed to his disciples to set before the multitude. And the disciples" gave "to the multitudes that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes, he divided among them all, as much as they would ; and they did all eat and were filled."

It is in the breast of him alone who was the cause of this multiplication to say how it was effected ; but it appears, from the context, that Christ did not on this occasion form *new* loaves, or *new* fishes, in the hands of the Apostles, as they were distributing them, because it is here affirmed that *the two fishes he divided amongst them all*, as he did the five barley loaves, which would be false if he had either formed new fishes or loaves, or the angels supplied others invisibly. To render the miracle still more conspicuous, Jesus was pleased to make it appear to the eyes of all that he had not only supplied their present wants, but that a considerable overplus was remaining. "And when they were filled, he said to his disciples : Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost," hereby insinuating that charity is perfectly consistent with frugality. "They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had

eaten, and of the fishes ;” which was in fact a much larger quantity than was at first set before our Lord to divide. “ And the number of those that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children,” who might possibly amount to an equal number. “ Now those men when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said : this is the prophet indeed ” like unto Moses, “ that is to come into the world ” as foretold by him : for as the people of God were miraculously fed by Moses in the desert, so likewise had Jesus, in this instance, fed them in a manner no less wonderful and miraculous.

PART IV.

CHAPTER LVI.

JESUS RETIRES AGAIN TO THE MOUNTAIN. HE WALKS UPON THE SEA—AND HEALS ALL THAT ARE SICK. MATT. XIV. 22—36. MARK VI. 45—56. JOHN VI. 15.

“JESUS therefore, when he perceived that they would come to take him by force, and make him king,” prevented the execution of their design, and thereby spared both the Romans and Herod Antipater those jealous fears of a rival in empire, which they would otherwise have experienced. By so doing, he effectually refuted beforehand the false accusations which were afterwards brought against him before Pilate, of raising a sedition among the people in his favour. Wherefore “he immediately obliged his disciples to go into the ship, that they might go before him over the water to the city of Bethsaida, whilst he dismissed the people; and when evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea, and when they had gone up into a ship, they went over the sea to Capharnaum. And” Jesus “having dismissed the multitude, fled again into the mountain himself alone, to pray; and it was now dark, and Jesus was not come unto” his disciples: “but the boat, in the midst of the sea, was tossed with waves, and himself alone” remained “on the land. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew.” This extraordinary agitation of the waters was purposely caused by Jesus, with a view of trying their faith and confidence in him during his absence. At length, “seeing them labouring in rowing, for the wind was” much “against them, about the fourth watch of the night,” or three o’clock in the morning, “he cometh to them, walking upon the

sea. When they had rowed therefore twenty-five or thirty furlongs," not much above three miles, "they see Jesus walking upon the sea, and drawing nigh to the ship; and he would have passed by them. But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition," and, according to the mistaken notion of seafaring persons, considering this as ominous of their approaching shipwreck, "were troubled; and they cried out for fear, saying: it is an apparition. For they all saw him," the moon being then at the full, but without affording sufficient light to distinguish him by his features. "And immediately Jesus spoke to them, and said: have a good heart, it is I, fear not." On hearing his voice, they instantly knew him, and regained their former tranquillity of mind. "And Peter," full of faith and love, "making answer, said: Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters. And he said: come. And Peter coming down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong" which probably changed suddenly, and drove the waves against him, "he was afraid: and when he began to sink, cried out, saying: Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus, stretching forth his hand, took hold of him, and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? They were willing therefore to take Jesus into the ship, and he went up to them into the ship. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased; and they were far more astonished within themselves: for they understood not concerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded," otherwise they would not have been so surprised on this occasion, if they had reflected on the greatness of that miracle. "And they that were in the boat came and adored him, saying: indeed thou art the Son of God. And presently the ship," by a new miracle, "was at the land to which they were going. And when they had passed over they came into the land of Genesareth," about 12 miles from Bethsaida, "and set to the shore. And when they were gone out of the ship,

the men of that place immediately knew him : and running through that whole country, they began to carry about on beds those who were ill, where they heard he was ; and they brought to him all that were diseased, and whithersoever he entered, into towns, or into villages, or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment ; and as many as touched him were healed."

CHAPTER LVII.

THE DISCOURSE OF JESUS CONCERNING THE HEAVENLY BREAD.
JOHN VI. 22—72.

"THE next day," after the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, "the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other ship there but" that "one" wherein the disciples crossed the sea, "and that Jesus had not entered into the ship with" them, "but that his disciples were gone away alone. But other ships came in from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they had eaten the bread, the Lord giving thanks. When therefore the multitude," after waiting some time, "saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they took shipping" in the said vessels, "and came to Capharnaum seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him, on the other side of the sea, they said to him : Rabbi, when camest thou hither ? Jesus," without paying any regard to this question, "answered them and said : Amen, amen I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen miracles," and are thereby induced to believe in me ; "but you seek me" merely "because you did eat of the loaves and were filled," and hence you are led to expect a continuance of supernatural refreshment. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you ; for him hath God the Father sealed," and hath sanctioned, as it were by letters patent attested by as many

seals as he has wrought miracles in your presence. "They said therefore unto him, what shall we do that we may work the works of God," and obtain of him eternal life? "Jesus answered and said to them: this is the work of God," which he requires of you, "that you believe in him whom he hath sent," to be your Master, your Lawgiver, the Mediator of your salvation, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. They readily understood that, in saying this, he spoke concerning himself. "They said therefore to him: what sign therefore dost thou show, that we may see and believe thee" to be the Son of God and the Messiah? And foreseeing that he might with great propriety allege the recent miracle of feeding five thousand persons with five loaves, they anticipate this obvious answer, by contrasting it with what Moses performed in the desert. It is true, say they, that you have once fed five thousand persons with five loaves: but "our fathers," to the number of 600,000, "did eat," not for once, but during forty years, "manna in the desert;" a species of food this, infinitely superior to barley bread, "as it is written: he gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven;" the manna only came from the clouds, and was called the bread from heaven, because it was a figure of it: "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world;" that is, a life of immortality and eternal happiness to all who worthily receive it.

From these words the Jews fancied to themselves a kind of real bread more delicious than the manna, which they were to enjoy during the whole course of their lives. "They said therefore unto him: Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst."

At the moment when Jesus styled himself the bread of

heaven, the Jews, it seems, gave evident marks, by their countenances, that they did not believe in him. He therefore added: "But I said unto you" already, "that you also have seen me," and witnessed my miracles, "and you believe not." But, in order to pique their jealousy upon this occasion, he declares to them, that there will always be persons who will believe in him, and who, by a persevering faith, will find in him their eternal salvation. This his meaning he expresses in a more circumscribed manner, by saying that he will not expel them from his house. If you do not believe in me, it is because you are not of the number of those whom my Father hath given me, for "all that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me," by an humble and sincere faith, "I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day," to live eternally with me. "And this is the will of my Father that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son" with the eyes of faith, "and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day," to enter into a glorious and incorruptible life. "The Jews therefore," instead of believing in Jesus Christ, in order to be of the happy number of those whom his Father had given him, "murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And they said," refuting as it were this his assertion: "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how then saith he, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said to them: murmur not among yourselves; no man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him," by his special grace, "and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets" concerning those who should believe in me, "and *they shall all be taught of God*. Every one" therefore "that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned"

of him who I am, "cometh to me" by faith and obedience. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, but he who is" born "of God: he" indeed "hath seen the Father." As to others, when the Scripture says they are taught of God, this is to be understood of an interior spiritual instruction, which takes place in the soul, and does not fall under the senses; but which is not the less real on that account, because it is the heart which hears the voice of this invisible teacher. "Amen, amen I say unto you" again, "he that believeth in me hath everlasting life."

After having thus stated the necessity of divine faith in those who wish to partake of this heavenly bread, Jesus proceeds to the second part of his discourse, in which he fully explains what that bread of life is, which he is about to impart to mankind in the mystery of the holy eucharist. He therefore again declares, first, that he himself is the bread of eternal life, and mentions the several properties peculiar to it: secondly, he applies to his own person and to his own flesh the idea of this bread, such as he has defined it. Beginning with the former of these, he says: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead;" but "this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it," with a lively and active faith, "he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven," to give life to the world. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give" at my last supper, is "my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews already greatly scandalised at Jesus for his having styled himself the living bread which came down from heaven, were now much more so, on hearing these last words, which conveyed to their minds, in their plain obvious sense, that Jesus would really give to them his own flesh to eat; but with regard to the manner in which he was to give it, they falsely represented to themselves that he was to cut his body in pieces and distribute it amongst them in a bloody

state, the very idea of which struck them with horror and disgust. "The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying: how can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them," in order to confirm the notion they had formed of a real eating of his body, and to remove all metaphorical interpretation of his words: "Amen, amen I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." But "he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him," as food abideth in him who takes it. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father," a divine life, always proceeding from him, "so he that eateth me," first, by faith, by believing in me, and secondly, by a real manducation of my body and blood in the holy communion, "the same also shall live by me. This is" truly "the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever;" for his soul shall live here by a life of justice, and hereafter by a life of glory; and his body likewise shall be raised up to a blessed immortality in the day of general resurrection. "These things he said teaching in the synagogue in Capharnaum," in the midst of a very numerous assembly, whereof a part consisted of those whom he had recently fed in the desert. "Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: this saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: doth this scandalise you," and appear unworthy of your belief in the present state of things, whilst I am with you? "If then you shall see the Son of man ascending up" into heaven, "where he was before," how will you then believe that he can give you his flesh, when become glorious and immortal, and elevated to the right hand of God? For it is much easier to conceive that a

thing present may be eaten, than to conceive the same of a thing absent and invisible to all our senses.

Christ next rebukes them for presuming to judge of his words by the testimony of their senses, and by their carnal and gross imagination. On the contrary, "it is the spirit," said he, that "quickeneth : the flesh profiteth nothing ;" for it cannot penetrate these sublime mysteries. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," and therefore, to understand them, you must be animated with the spirit of God, and live the life of faith. "But there are some of you that" have not this spirit, and live not this life, and so "believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray him. And he said : therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to me," by an humble and firm faith, "unless it be given him by my Father. After this many of his disciples went back : and walked no more with him." Our Saviour, who saw them thus abandon him, and most feelingly resented their eternal loss, did not offer to call them back again : and yet this he would most certainly have done, if they had been under a mistake only in regard to his meaning. If this had been the case, he had only to tell them that he had meant no more by all his discourse, than that they should believe in him. But no, this was not all : these disciples had heard his whole discourse, and were well assured, from the plain and obvious meaning of his words, that he promised to give them his *real flesh* to be their food ; and not being able to understand how this could be, they were scandalised at it, and followed the example of the other unbelieving Jews. What a striking likeness is observable between Protestants and these incredulous Jews, who said, on this occasion, *how can he give us his flesh to eat ?* Their answers and objections are reducible to this, when they tell us that the real presence contradicts their senses, their reason, and that they know it to be false. But let us now see how differently the apostles acted on this occasion.

When the apostate disciples had now withdrawn themselves, “then Jesus said to the twelve: will you also go away?” Here again we have another clear proof of the real presence. The twelve had heard all that passed; they had seen the Jews strive amongst themselves, and the disciples murmur and leave their Master; they understood what he said in the same literal sense the others had done; it could indeed bear no other meaning; but when Jesus put the above question to them, leaving them to their free choice, whether to follow him or withdraw themselves, “Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art Christ the Son of” the living “God,” and therefore able to make good thy words, however hard and difficult they may appear to others. Admire here the noble simplicity of their faith; they believe the words of their Master without the least hesitation; they believe them in that very meaning in which the others had refused to believe them; they believe them as containing a promise of giving them his real flesh to eat, and his real blood to drink; and they believe with a most firm and sincere faith, for this plain but noble reason, because he *is Christ the Son of God*, who is absolutely incapable of deceiving his creatures, and whose almighty power is perfectly able to fulfil his word, and to perform the promise which he here made them.

Judas, however, it would seem, did not acquiesce in the above public avowal made by Peter, and yet he resigned not his apostleship, nor did he withdraw from the company of Jesus, as some of the disciples had done. He found his advantage in carrying the common purse, and in being the bearer of the alms bestowed upon his brethren. Knowing perfectly this his inward disposition, “Jesus answered them,” with some restriction to the public profession which Peter had just made in the name of his brethren; and excepting Judas, yet without naming him, he said: “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil,” through

avarice and incredulity? “Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for he it was that was to betray him, being one of the twelve.”

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE PHARISEES COMPLAIN THAT THE DISCIPLES EAT WITH UNWASHED HANDS: CHRIST, IN HIS TURN, REPROACHES THEM WITH VIOLATING THE LAW OF GOD, ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR HUMAN TRADITIONS, AND SHOWS THAT TRUE PURITY IS NOT MERELY EXTERNAL, BUT SEATED IN THE HEART. MATT. XV. 1—20. MARK VII. 1—23. JOHN VII.

It has been remarked by St. John, c. vi. ver. 4, that when Jesus withdrew into the desert of Bethsaida, the passover was near at hand. We are therefore naturally led to expect that, after the discourse concerning the eucharist, this evangelist would relate, as usual, his journey to Jerusalem, there to keep the paschal festival. But he rather gives us to understand that he did not ascend thither on this occasion, on account of the imminent danger which would have threatened his life. “After these things” (John vii. 1) “Jesus walked through Galilee; for he would not walk through Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. And the Pharisees,” seeing he did not make his appearance during the festival, “assemble unto him,” in Galilee, “and some of the Scribes coming from Jerusalem,” join them. They had not, it seems, any intention at present of seizing on his person, but only of examining more narrowly into his doctrine and actions, that they might be better prepared to criminate him on some future occasion. On meeting with Jesus therefore, they enter into an altercation with him, on the frivolous subject of his disciples eating with unwashed hands; whilst he, in his turn, justly reproaches them with guilt in a matter of the highest concern, and justifies both himself and his

disciples, as to the pretended crime laid to their charge. "And when they had seen some of his disciples eat bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, eat not without often washing their hands, holding the tradition of the ancients: and when they come from the market, unless they be washed, they eat not: and many other things there are that have been delivered to them to observe, the washings of cups, and pots, and of brazen vessels, and of beds," or couches, on which they reclined at meals, according to the custom of those times. These traditions were glosses or explanations of the law made by their forefathers, and were called the *oral law*, because they came by tradition, not being given in writing, as was the law of Moses. "And the Pharisees and Scribes," under this false notion of the obligation of such traditionary practices, coming to see Jesus, "asked him, saying: why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answering, said to them," by way of just retort: "why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said: honour thy father and thy mother; and he that shall curse father or mother, let him be punished with death. But you say: whosoever shall say to his father or mother," when applying for relief under the pressure of want, "whatsoever corban (which is a gift) proceedeth from me, shall profit thee;" in other words: I have consecrated to God all that share of my goods which I could otherwise have imparted to you, and I am in duty bound to give the preference to God in the disposal of my property, whilst you will not fail to reap a spiritual advantage equally with me in all such offerings to the Deity. Whoever, therefore, said the Pharisees, shall thus address his indigent parents, he is no longer bound to attend to their wants, "and he shall not" be obliged to "honour his father and mother," by relieving them. "And further, you suffer him not to do anything" more "for his

father or mother, making void the word of God, and the commandment of God, by your own tradition which you have given forth." Jesus reproached them likewise with many other similar traditions, equally founded upon injustice, which are not particularised by the Evangelists. "And many other things," says he, "you do like to these."

Considering then the Pharisees and the doctors of the law as living in the constant habit of hypocrisy, or rather of an insatiable avarice, disguised under the false cloak of religion, Jesus applied to them the prophecy of Isaias : "Hypocrites," said he to them, "well hath Isaias prophesied of you, " saying : *this people honoureth me with their lips : but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching* " not the law of God, but " *the doctrines and precepts of men* : for leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups : and many other things you do like to these," equally vain and insignificant. "And he said to them," condemning in a vein of irony these their ill-regulated practices of religion ; "finely done, you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own traditions " with the greater punctuality, as if they were more perfect than the laws of the decalogue. "And again, calling the people, he said to them : hear me all of you and understand. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him : but the things which proceed from a man, those are they that defile a man. If any man hath ears to hear let him hear." He entered not into any further explication of this subject before the Pharisees, because they were undeserving of it, and thus the obscurity of his words afforded them an ample field for their censures. "Then came his disciples, and said to him : dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were scandalised." They hereby insinuated, that on his part it might not be improper to soften what to them appeared harsh in his decision, in order thereby to appease the minds of the Pharisees, apparently much irritated, especially as by their

weight and authority they might become very formidable enemies to him. "But he answering" to this suggestion, which was grounded on human policy, "said," that nothing was to be apprehended from the power and malice of the Pharisees, because their sect would be extremely short-lived if compared with the religion which he was come to establish. This is the meaning of the figurative expression employed by him, when he said: "every plant," that is, every doctrine, which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

He further answered, that they need not be anxious concerning the Pharisees, nor their ill-founded scruples: "Let them alone," said he: "they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." By this answer we are taught that we are not to be troubled at the scandal which some persons lightly take at our conduct, and even at our good works, whilst the real cause of scandal is *solely* in themselves. "And when he was come into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him the parable. And Peter," in the name of the rest, "said: expound to us this parable. But he said," surprised as it were at their stupidity, "are you also yet without understanding," and "so void of knowledge?" Then he condescended to explain the subject to them as follows: "understand you not that everything from without, entering into a man, cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart," nor into the blood, which by circulation passes through the heart, "but goeth into the belly," whence it is separated from the other parts of the food, "and goeth out" by the usual way, "into the privy, purging all meats." Jesus had not here an idea of alluding to what might vitiate or infect the blood, but only to that which might defile the soul in the eyes of God; yet as the Apostles, who understood him in a gross and material sense, erroneously confounded these two meanings, it became necessary to instance this process of nature, in order to make it understood by the Apostles, that our food cannot possibly defile the soul.

“And,” therefore, to rectify still more their ideas, “he told them the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart; and those things,” says he, defile a man: for within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false testimonies, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within,” and “these are the things that defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man.”

CHAPTER LIX.

THE CANAANEAN WOMAN. MATT. XV. 21—28. MARK. VII. 24—30.

“AND Jesus went from thence,” *i. e.* from Galilee, “and retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; and entering into a house, he would that no man should know it, and he could not be hid. For a woman of Canaan, who came out of those coasts,” and “whose daughter had an unclean spirit, as soon as she heard of him,” came, and “crying out, said to him” as he was entering the house: “have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Jesus answered her not a word; and his disciples came and besought him” in her favour, “saying: send her away, for she crieth after us. And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel,” and not to the Gentiles whose conversion to the faith is reserved for a future period. “But she,” not discouraged, “came in and fell down at his feet, [for the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophœnician born] and adored him, saying: Lord help me: and she besought him,” in this posture of profound adoration, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. “Who answering said to her: Suffer first the children to be filled: for it is not

good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs," *i. e.* to the Gentiles, who are frequently in Scripture called dogs, on account of their barefaced impiety in publicly prostituting themselves to the worship of idols. "But she," notwithstanding this refusal, did not despair of success, and preserving both her temper and her hopes, at length obtained the object of her request by means of an answer equally acute and humble, which our Lord himself suggested to her: for allowing the justice of Christ's observation, "she answered and said," taking advantage of it: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat, under the table, of the crumbs of the children that fall from the table of their masters." May it therefore be granted to us Gentiles to gather a small part of this abundance of graces which you diffuse among the Jews. "Then Jesus," overcome as it were by her pious importunity, "answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt. For this" thy "saying," so full of faith and humility, "go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And" accordingly "her daughter was cured from that hour. And when she was come into her house, she found the girl lying upon the bed, and that the devil was gone out."

CHAPTER LX.

CHRIST CURES A DEAF AND DUMB PERSON, AS ALSO MANY OTHER SICK PEOPLE. MATT. XV. 29—31. MARK VII. 31—37.

"AND when Jesus had passed away from thence, going out of the coasts of Tyre, he came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis." This district was so called, because it comprised ten cities, some of which were situated on the east, and others on the west of the river Jordan. The first and principal city was Scythopolis,

and the rest, according to Pliny, were Philadelphia, Raphana, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, Canatha, and Damascus, although others reckon them differently. "And they bring to Jesus one deaf and dumb," or, as it is in the Greek, one who had an impediment in his speech; "and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him," in order to his cure. In healing this man Jesus made use of various exterior ceremonies, and in so doing he has fully authorised the use which the Catholic Church makes of ceremonies in the administration of the holy sacraments. "And having taken him aside from the crowd, he put his fingers in his ears, and spitting he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven he groaned, and he said to him Ephpheta, which is " in the Syriac language, "be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them against it, so much the more did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying, he hath done all things well; he hath made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." It is to be observed that all these actions, as performed by Jesus, were mysterious, and represented to succeeding ages the difficulty there is in restoring sight to such minds as are spiritually blind, or hearing to such as are become deaf to the voice of God: it is with a view to this mysterious sense that the Church has, in imitation of Christ, adopted these as part of her ceremonies in the administration of the sacrament of baptism.

Now when Jesus had wrought the above-mentioned cure, "going up into a mountain he sat there. And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others: and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them. So that the multitude marvelled, seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see: and they glorified the God of Israel."

CHAPTER LXI.

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND AND UPWARDS WITH SEVEN
LOAVES AND A FEW SMALL FISHES. MATT. XV. 32—39.
MARK VIII. 1—10.

THIS multitude of people continued with Jesus three whole days, being still eager to hear his instructions, and attracted likewise by the greatness of his miracles. Seeing their attachment to him, he displayed in their behalf, first, his fatherly care of them, and secondly, his divine power. By the former, he gave proofs of his being the Saviour of man, and by the latter, of his possessing a sovereign control over the works of the creation. "And Jesus in those days again, when there was a great multitude" with him "and had nothing to eat, having called his disciples together, said to them: I have compassion on the multitude; for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way: for some of them are come from afar off." He thus gave his disciples a sufficient insight into his intention, by showing the necessity of working a miracle upon this occasion. "And his disciples," as if not remembering what Jesus had done before on a similar emergency, "answered him: from whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? Whence then can we get so many loaves in the desert as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus said to them: how many loaves have you? But they said seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the people to place themselves on the ground. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks to his heavenly Father," for that providential care with which he supplies our wants, even in a miraculous manner when necessary for us, "he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them.

And they all ate and were filled : and they took up seven baskets of what remained of the fragments," to intimate that God recompenses with a liberal hand the alms that are given for his sake. "And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides children and women," who probably amounted to as many more. "And he sent them away, and immediately going up into a ship with his disciples," in order to prevent their following him, "he came into the parts of Dalmanutha, into the territories of Magedan," on the east coast of the sea of Galilee, between Gerasa and Corozain.

The miracle here wrought by Christ in feeding so great a multitude, was unquestionably a wonderful effect of his power ; yet, as St. Austin observes, it was not a greater work than what he continually performed for the subsistence and nourishment of the whole human race. Whether God at once multiplies in his own hands a few loaves, and makes them capable of satisfying four thousand persons, or, by the general laws of nature which he has established, multiplies the seed in the earth for the food of mankind, the miracle, says this holy Father, is the same, and an effect of the same Almighty power. However, though both these works are equally the effects of Omnipotence, we are nevertheless very differently affected by them. The extraordinary works which God is pleased occasionally to display, never fail to make a lively impression on us, because we there discover his immediate power exerting itself in an unusual manner ; whilst the constant and daily operations of the same power in the ordinary productions of nature pass unnoticed, because we refer them merely to secondary causes ; not reflecting on the primary cause which first established these laws, and which continually preserves them in their course. Reason and faith should correct this mistake, and convince us that God is equally great, equally deserving of our praise and adoration, whether he gives laws to nature for our subsistence, or suspends those laws for our instruction. We are no less indebted to the bounty of his Providence for the helps which we receive

by the ordinary course of secondary causes, than if they were immediately conferred upon us by the miraculous exertions of Omnipotence.

CHAPTER LXII.

JESUS REPROVES THE PHARISEES FOR REQUIRING A SIGN IN THE HEAVENS, AND CAUTIONS HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST HYPOCRISY. MATT. XVI. 1—12. MARK VIII. 11—21. LUKE XII. 54—57.—HE GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA. MARK VIII. 22—26.

“AND there came to him the Pharisees and Sadducees,” persons widely different from each other in their religious sentiments, but united in their design of persecuting Jesus. “And they began to question with him, asking him to show them a sign from heaven.” This they did by way of “tempting him.” They mistrusted, it seems, all such miracles as Jesus had hitherto wrought, by touching the parties whom he healed; and they grounded their incredulity upon the false notion, that miracles of this kind might be merely the effect of some occult quality. But they considered other miracles less suspicious and objectionable, which were effected by a single word upon distant objects, exposed to public view in the heavens or the clouds. Jesus so far condescended to them as to propose two signs excellently well adapted to the nature of their religious tenets, and to prove his divine mission. But to both he absolutely refused to give any present sign, such as was the object of their unbelieving curiosity.

He began by referring the Pharisees to the signs already discernible of the time of the Messiah’s coming into the world, and he took advantage of their known or pretended abilities in prognosticating natural events, to reproach them for their ignorance with regard to that most happy period

which the Scriptures so clearly described and pointed out. "But he answered and said to them: When it is evening you say: it will be fair weather, for the sky is red: And in the morning, to-day there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering. When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say: a shower is coming, and so it happeneth: And when you see the south wind blow, you say: there will be heat; and it cometh to pass. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth," from the different signs in the clouds, "and can you not know the signs of the times," and of the coming of the Messiah, pointed out by the prophets, whereof many are already fulfilled, and others on the point of being so? These signs were: 1. The translation of the sovereignty or sceptre of Juda to foreign princes. 2. The accomplishment of the seventy weeks of years prophesied by Daniel, amounting in the whole to four hundred and ninety years, the end of which was now drawing nigh. 3. The miraculous powers attributed to the Messiah by the prophets, and which Jesus had so frequently exerted in their presence. "And why, even of yourselves," said he, "do you not judge that which is just," and instead of fruitlessly requesting fresh signs, why do you not make a proper use of your sagacity, so successful in natural things, to form a more equitable judgment in my regard? "And sighing deeply in spirit," at their unaccountable conduct, "he saith: why doth this generation ask a sign? Amen, amen I say to you, a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." The meaning of this is, that his future resurrection from the dead, which would take place three days after his death, was prefigured by the resurrection of Jonas, who was buried during three days in a whale's belly; and the accomplishment of this miraculous prodigy would prove to them the divine origin of his person and of his mission, and ought to have particular weight with the Sadducees, who admitted neither the resur-

rection of the body, nor the immortality of the soul. "And he left them and went away. And leaving them he went up again into the ship, and passed to the other side of the water. And when his disciples were come over the water, they had forgotten to take bread; and they had but one loaf with them in the ship. And he" taking every occasion to instruct them, "charged them, saying: take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod. But they" no sooner heard him say this, than they recollected their having omitted to make provision for their passage, and they "thought within themselves, saying: because we have taken no bread," therefore he gives us this caution.

"Which" secret thoughts "Jesus knowing, saith to them: why do you think within yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread? do you not yet know nor understand? Have you still your heart blinded? Having eyes, see you not? and having ears, hear you not?" Having thus rebuked them for their want of knowledge and penetration, he further upbraids them with their want of faith and confidence in him. "Neither do you remember," said he, "when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They said to him twelve. When also the seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took ye up? And they said to him seven. And he said to them: how, do you not yet understand that it was not concerning bread I said to you: beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" He, however, explained no further what he had said here, but left them to guess at his meaning. "Then," at length, "they understood that he said not that they should beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees;" because the nature of it was to cause in the mind the same effects as leaven in the dough; that is, sourness and fermentation; in other words, anger, ambition, pride, and hypocrisy. Such indeed were the effects ensuing

from their pharisaical traditions, some of which were empty and vain, whilst others, so far from promoting true piety, were directly contrary to the law of God. As to the doctrines of the Sadducees or Herodians, they tended, like those of modern freethinkers, to subvert all religion, by cutting off all hopes of happiness in a future state.

“And,” on their landing, “they came to Bethsaida, and they bring to him a blind man, and they besought him that he would touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the town,” which appears from the Evangelists to have been a small place, and not surrounded with walls: “and spitting upon his eyes, laying his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything; and looking up, he said: I see men as it were trees walking. After that again he laid his hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly. And he sent him into his house, saying: go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.” In this blind man we may behold a figure of the spiritual blindness which is caused by sin, and particularly by the vice of infidelity. The first grace of conversion which we should solicit for a soul in this state is, that she may know her miserable situation, and be inspired with an ardent desire of her deliverance from it. Let us often beseech Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, to enlighten those who are thus sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, that they may direct their feet into the way of peace. The conversion of such a sinner is a great work: to change a corrupt heart, not less power is necessary than to change the order of nature. The cure of spiritual disorders is a prodigy of grace, in like manner as the sudden cure of corporal infirmities is an effect of Omnipotence.

CHAPTER LXIII.

ST. PETER'S PUBLIC CONFESSION OF JESUS CHRIST—HIS PRIMACY—HE IS REBUKED BY OUR LORD, WHO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, FORETELLS HIS DEATH, AND TEACHES THE NECESSITY OF CARRYING OUR CROSS. MATT. XVI. 13—28. MARK VIII. 27—38. LUKE IX. 18—27.

“AND Jesus,” departing from Bethsaida, “came into the quarters of Cæsarea Philippi,” a city so named to distinguish it from another Cæsarea, situated on the Mediterranean; “and it came to pass, that he sought a retired place for prayer, and was alone praying (his disciples were also with him). “And” after this “Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi;” but it does not appear that he entered into Cæsarea itself. In all this country infidelity almost universally prevailed, and Christ foresaw he should have few or no followers. Wherefore it was on this occasion when he was now no longer embarrassed by the surrounding multitudes, that he chose to impart to Peter his design of raising him to the first and most exalted dignity of his Church. To prepare him for this communication, he first required of him, by an act of faith, an avowal or confession of his divinity, and of his being the Son of God. After this he imparted to his Apostles for the first time the intelligence of his approaching death: and lastly, he declared to them, and to all his followers, the necessity which each of them would be under of sharing in his sufferings and death, by carrying their respective crosses, and leading a mortified life.

When therefore Jesus had ended his prayer, they pursued their journey; “and in the way he asked his disciples, saying to them: whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: some John the Baptist,” risen again to life, “and other some Elias, and others Jeremias (from his great

zeal and courage in reproving the vices of the Pharisees), and others say that one of the former prophets is risen again. Then he saith to them: but whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter," full of faith and zeal above the rest of the apostles, "answered," both for himself and them, "and said: thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," not by an adoptive filiation (which had already been ascribed to him by those who had hitherto styled him the Son of God), but by a real and natural filiation. "And Jesus answering, said to him: blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee; but my Father who is in heaven," and who hath imparted to thee this important secret, by means of a supernatural light. "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter (or rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." Thus did Jesus reward the public confession of St. Peter.

1. As the latter had openly named him the Christ or the Messiah, so he now confirmed to him the new name of Peter, which he had already given him, assuring him that thenceforth he should be a firm stone or rock (which the name of Peter imports), and that upon this rock, as a solid foundation, he would build his Church. Moreover, as the Church of Christ was to be a permanent edifice, and to last to the end of time, this privilege of being the foundation stone was attached to all the successors of St. Peter.

2. He rewarded the confession of St. Peter by promising to this his Church a duration equal to that of the world, in spite of all the efforts of its enemies: these enemies are principally the authors of schisms and heresies; and they may fitly be styled the *gates* of hell, because to this place they lead all those who blindly and obstinately take them for their guides. And though these gates of hell shall wage

an uninterrupted war against the Church until the end of time, yet Christ here solemnly declares, that they shall never prevail against it, so far as to destroy or annihilate it, but that it shall continue unmoved through all ages.

3. He added, as a further reward, the promise of bestowing upon Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, assuring him, that whatever he should bind upon earth, should be bound also in heaven, and that whatever he should loose upon earth, should also be loosed in heaven. This promise extends not merely to the power of remitting or retaining sins, which was common to the other Apostles, but likewise to the sovereign power and authority of governing the Church, with a view to the spiritual good of souls, and to their acquiring eternal happiness. Moreover, as St. Peter was not to be immortal, and as the same spiritual wants which existed during his life would subsist after its termination, it is clear to every impartial person that this high privilege was not merely personal, but was to be handed down to all future successors of St. Peter.

“Then” Jesus, not choosing that this confession of faith pronounced by St. Peter should at that period be divulged, “he commanded his disciples, and he strictly charged them that they should not tell any man of him, that he was Jesus the Christ.” The reason why he withheld from the public this article of our creed, the belief of which the Apostles afterwards strictly required from those on whom they conferred baptism, was lest it might prove a hindrance to his death; for as the Jews believed their Messiah to be immortal, those who might have placed their belief in Jesus as such would never have acquiesced in his being condemned to death; or if they could not have prevented it they would instantly have renounced him as their Messiah. Hence they whose conjectures the Apostles reported concerning his person, believed him to be either John the Baptist, Elias, or Jeremias, or some other of the ancient prophets: but it does not appear that any of them had formed the idea of his being *the*

Christ, which is a certain proof that Jesus had not yet been announced to them under that quality. "From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples," thus prepared for the unwelcome intelligence, "that the Son of man must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients, and by the high-priests, and the Scribes, and be killed : and after three days rise again. And he spoke the word openly," and without any of those figurative ways of speech not unusual in his other discourses. "And Peter," glowing with zeal and affection towards Jesus, and feeling an additional confidence from the dignity recently conferred on him, "taking him" aside, "began to rebuke him, saying : Lord, be it far from thee ; this shall not be unto thee. Who turning about" again, "and seeing the disciples, threatened Peter, saying : Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal to me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." He styles him *Satan*, which word signifies an enemy, because he, however unknowingly or innocently, raised an opposition against the will of God, against the glory of Jesus, against the redemption of mankind, and against the destruction of the devil's kingdom ; for all these things were to be effected by the sufferings and death of Jesus. These severe heads of accusation against Peter are all comprised in this one, that he had no savour or relish for the things of God, but only for the things of this world : and that in consequence of such a relish, he was led to avoid ignominy, sufferings, and death, which yet are the means made use of by the Almighty for the salvation of mankind. "Then Jesus, calling the multitude together with his disciples, said to all : if any man will come after me," and be my disciple, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Here are three conditions which Christ requires of all his followers : 1. They must deny themselves ; that is, renounce their own will in everything which is contrary to the will of God : they must be willing to part with their

goods, their honour, their reputation, and even life itself, when God's service is concerned. 2. They must daily carry their cross, which alludes to the species of death which Jesus underwent for us; that is, they must bear with patience and resignation all such afflictions and sufferings as God shall please to send them, but particularly those which the world shall inflict upon them for his holy name, or for adhering to his holy law. 3. Each one must follow Jesus, carrying his cross, and must walk in his footsteps by an imitation of his virtues; that is, we must live up to the faith we profess, and have Jesus and his sacred passion ever before our eyes.

He further assigns two reasons for our complying with the above-mentioned conditions. The first is, that when the defence or the practice of our religion is in question, then an attachment to life is fatal to our eternal salvation. "For whosoever," says he, "will save his" temporal "life, shall lose it" for eternity. The second reason is drawn from that infinite happiness which will most assuredly be the reward of a death suffered for the sake of Jesus. "And whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel," a life of itself frail and perishable, and of a most uncertain tenure, "shall save it" in the next world in an immortal and infinitely more perfect state. He then explains the first of these reasons, and adds greatly to its force, by allowing, in the manner of a supposition, that a man, by renouncing his belief in him, may not only save his life, but even gain thereby the dominion and possession of the whole world. Yet he declares such a person to be not the less miserable and unhappy: "For what will it profit a man," says he, "if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his" immortal "soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels. For

the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works. And he said to them : Amen I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming in power," and "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." As these last words cannot be understood of the last coming of Jesus, some understand them of the glory which he received by his resurrection, others of the glorious establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ throughout the world, by the preaching of the gospel. But others, with greater probability, refer them to his transfiguration, an account of which is immediately subjoined by the Evangelists. This promise of a transitory view of his glory, he was induced to make, first, to prove what he had just asserted, viz. that he should one day come, in all the glory of his Father, to judge each man according to his works; secondly, to afford by this glorious scene some consolation to his Apostles, who had heard, not without the greatest emotions of grief, the prediction of his approaching death, and the necessity they were under of following him.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST. MATT. XVII. 1—13.

MARK IX. 2—13. LUKE IX. 28—36.

JESUS delayed not long the execution of the promise which he had made of manifesting his glory. After a very short interval, during which nothing remarkable is mentioned, his transfiguration took place in the following manner, as related by three of the Evangelists : "And it came to pass about eight days after these words, that he took unto him Peter, and James, and John his brother ; and he led them up into a high mountain apart." This, by tradition, is thought to

be Mount Thabor, which is exceedingly high and beautiful rising something like a sugar-loaf, in a vast plain, and was anciently covered with green trees and shrubs. It is situated in the midst of the lower Galilee, according to St. Jerome, almost at an equal distance from the Mediterranean and the sea of Tiberias, and about sixty miles from Cæsarea, where the promise of his transfiguration had been made. Wherefore "he went up" with these three favourite disciples "into" this "mountain to pray : and whilst he prayed, the shape of his countenance was altered ;" not by a change of his features, but by the shining light and majesty of his glory. "And he was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments," being penetrated with those brilliant rays of light, "became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can make" equally "white." He thus appeared entirely transfigured by a miracle, which was itself but the interruption of a still greater miracle. For this effulgent glory with which Jesus was clothed for a few moments, was only the natural effect of the union of the Divinity with his human nature. It had been suspended, not without a degree of violence, from the first moment of his incarnation, and this suspension was in fact a much greater prodigy than that eclipse of the sun which happened at his death, and which continued three whole hours. On the present occasion, therefore, Jesus allowed a few of the rays of his glory to appear outwardly, which at other times he suppressed under the veil of his humility.

The end or object proposed by Jesus in the exhibition of this mystery was that of giving testimony to two fundamental truths of religion. First, to his being the Son of God, which Peter had, in the presence of all his brethren, lately confessed. Second, to the certainty of his approaching passion and death, which he had recently imparted to them, but which Peter, actuated by a zeal for his Master, had opposed to the utmost of his power. A third motive

was to fortify the minds of his Apostles against the fear of persecutions, by giving them here a glimpse of that glory they might expect hereafter.

The first witness to vouch for the truth of the divine filiation of Jesus was Jesus himself, clothed by his heavenly Father with that effulgence of glory which was due to the only Son of God. The two witnesses who vouched for the certainty of his approaching death were the two most celebrated prophets of the old law. For "behold two men were talking with him, and they were Moses and Elias, appearing in majesty. And they spoke of his" painful "decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem," this being the end of the law, and the accomplishment of all the ancient prophecies. "But Peter, and they that were with him, were," at first, "heavy with sleep," it being night, "and waking," in consequence of the shining rays of light which struck their eyes, "they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him : and they were talking with Jesus." These they distinguished to be Moses and Elias, either by a divine inspiration, or by some part of their discourse, which discovered who they were. The reason of this apparition was doubtless to reconcile the minds of these disciples to that event which had so greatly scandalized them. I mean the death of Jesus, by giving it all the weight and sanction of the law and of the prophets, here represented by Moses and Elias. "And it came to pass, that as they were departing from him, Peter," in raptures of admiration and joy at the grandeur of the scene, "saith to Jesus : Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : for he knew not what he said : " otherwise he would never have desired that for the present time of trial on earth which is reserved only for heaven : neither would he have contented himself with beholding only the glorified humanity of Christ, since this transient sight can bear no proportion to the beatific vision and contemplation of the Divinity itself.

“And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them,” apparently in the shape of a tent or pavilion. The Almighty, it seems, was pleased thus to fulfil the wish of Peter, thereby to show that he himself is the tent or pavilion, under the shade of which the blessed shall dwell for ever; for at the same moment the two prophets ascended in the air, and darting into this cloud, vanished from the sight of the three Apostles; “and they were afraid, when they entered into the cloud. And lo! a voice out of the cloud saying: this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.” This was no other than the eternal Father, who thus acknowledged Jesus for his only begotten Son, and sanctioned the confession which Peter had made concerning him, authorising likewise his whole doctrine, and commanding us to listen to it with all docility and respect. “And whilst the voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone,” so that no doubt could arise as to which of the three this sublime testimony referred. “And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus,” observing their confusion, “came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and fear not. And they, lifting up their eyes, and immediately looking about, saw no man any more, but Jesus only with them,” in his usual form. “And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of man shall be risen again from the dead.” The probable motive of this injunction was, that so wonderful an event might not be exposed to the incredulity and rash censures of the Pharisees, who hated Jesus, and were ever disposed to calumniate and misrepresent even his most evident miracles. “And they kept the word to themselves, inquiring one of another what this should mean,” which Jesus had said on this occasion, “*when he shall be risen from the dead.*” They, however, ventured not to ask him any further explanation, under the apprehension of hearing what might prove

extremely unpleasant to the affectionate feelings which they entertained for their divine Master.

After having here seen Elias, the three Apostles could not but recall to mind what they had always heard respecting that prophet, and which now appeared not easily reconcilable with what they had just witnessed; for instead of performing the office of precursor to the Messiah, and walking before him, as they had been taught to expect, they had now seen him withdraw himself with Moses; “and” therefore “his disciples,” in order to clear up this difficulty, “asked” Jesus, “saying: Why then do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elias must come first? But he answering” to their request, entered into an explanation of that text of the prophet Malachy, by distinguishing his two comings. In regard to the second, which would be at the end of the world, he confirmed the opinion of the Pharisees with respect to Elias, and “said to them: Elias indeed shall come” before the last judgment; and “when he shall come first, he shall restore all things,” by causing the Jews to enter into the bosom of the Church, in the same manner as Enoc will cause the strayed Gentiles to return to it; and thus will be formed, by a happy coalition, one only people: “and as it is written of the Son of man that he must suffer many things and be despised,” so Elias will have to undergo the same sufferings and indignities.

But since the Pharisees were so resolved to make the non-appearance of Elias the criterion of their belief in him, as if each time of his coming was to be preceded by an Elias, Jesus declared to them, that even in this supposition they were without excuse, since Elias was come, and had already fulfilled the office of forerunner to his first coming. “But I say to you,” added Christ, “that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of man shall suffer from them. Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist,” who came possessing the spirit as well as the

power of Elias ; that is, with an ardent zeal of stirring up mankind to repentance, though, in fact, he was a very different person. This mysterious transfiguration of our Lord was one of the means which he made use of to confirm the faith of his Apostles, and to convince them, in a manner the most sensible, of his Divinity ; and, in effect, St. Péter has mentioned it in one of his Epistles, as a convincing evidence of that eternal truth (2 Peter i. 16—18.)

CHAPTER LXV.

JESUS CURES A PERSON BOTH LUNATIC AND DUMB. MATT. XVII.
14—21. MARK IX. 14—29. LUKE IX. 37—45.

“AND it came to pass the day following, when they came down from the mountain, there met him a great multitude ; and when he was come to his disciples, he saw a great crowd about them, and the Scribes disputing with them. And presently all the people, seeing Jesus, was astonished and struck with fear,” probably at the appearance of majesty which yet remained visible in his countenance after his recent transfiguration ; “and running to him, they saluted him. And he asked them : What do you dispute about among yourselves ?” He seems here to have arrived at a seasonable moment, to rescue his disciples from the confusion they were under at the ill-success they had met with in exorcising a possessed person. “And behold there came to him a man, one of the multitude,” who, “falling down on his knees before him, said : Master, I have brought my son, having a dumb spirit, for he is a lunatic, and suffereth much : for he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water ; and a spirit seizeth him, who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him : and I brought him to

thy disciples, and desired, and spoke to "them "to cast him out, and they could not cure him." Wherefore, "I beseech thee, look upon my son, because he is my only one:" yes, "Lord, have pity on my son. Then Jesus answered and said: O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And they brought him, and as he was coming to him, when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him," and "threw him down and tore him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming. And" Jesus, to convince the bystanders of the violence of the disorder, as well as of the difficulty of the cure, "asked his father, How long is it since this has happened unto him? But he said, From his infancy; and oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, help us, taking pity on us. Jesus," who had healed many sick persons, independently of their faith, chose, in this instance, to insist on it as a previous condition, before he complied with his request. Wherefore he "saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears, said: I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief," and supply the deficiency of my faith. "And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him: and enter not any more into him; and crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him; and he became as dead, so that many said, he is dead; but Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose, and the child was cured from that hour; and he restored him to his father, and all were astonished at the mighty power of God. And when he was come into the house, then came the disciples to Jesus secretly, and," apprehensive lest they might have forfeited the gift of working miracles through their own misconduct, "asked him: Why could we not cast him out? Jesus

said to them: Because of your unbelief. The Apostles said to the Lord: Increase our faith. And the Lord said: If you had faith like to a grain of mustard-seed, you might say to this mulberry-tree, be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the sea; and it would obey you. Amen I say to you" again, "if you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say," even "to this mountain" before you (pointing to Mount Thabor), "remove from hence thither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you," which the glory of God and the salvation of souls shall call for at your hands. Besides a want of faith, Christ assigned a second cause of their ill-success, and that was their neglecting to fast and pray. "But this kind," said he, "is not to be cast out but by prayer and fasting."

CHAPTER LXVI.

JESUS, A SECOND TIME, FORETELLS HIS DEATH, AND PAYS THE TRIBUTE OF TWO DRACHMAS. MATT. XVII. 22—27. MARK IX. 30—32. LUKE IX. 44, 45.

"AND departing from thence," that is, from the small town which is situated at the foot of Mount Thabor, and which by some is called Cheseleth-Thabor, Jesus turned his whole thoughts to Mount Calvary, which was to be the scene of a transfiguration very different from the preceding one. His mind being now intent upon going, without loss of time, into Judea, there to complete the end and design of his mission, "they passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it," and directed his route principally through such places as he had not before visited. "And when they were conversing together in Galilee, and every one wondered at all the things he did, he said to his disciples: Lay you up in your hearts these words, that the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they

shall kill him, and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day."

This unwelcome intelligence he imparted to them, whilst yet in Galilee, where every one was in the greatest admiration at the wonders he had wrought, in order thus to prevent the objection which his enemies might have alleged, of his having foretold his death only upon his arrival in Judea, when he could not but perceive the marked antipathy of the Jews against his person. "But the Apostles understood not this word, and it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not." Their firm belief that he was the Messiah, and consequently immortal, as they imagined, rendered his death, in their eyes, a mystery of the greatest obscurity, which they could not fathom; "and they were afraid to ask him concerning this word: and they were troubled exceedingly" at this declaration, which seemed to forebode something very unpleasant to their feelings and unfortunate to their divine Master. "And when they were come to Capharnaum," which place Jesus now visited for the last time, and probably for the purpose of finally settling his affairs, "they that received the didrachmas" for the repairs of the temple "came to Peter, and said to him: Doth not your Master pay the didrachma, or tribute money? he said: Yes." This seems to imply, that the payment of this tribute was omitted or evaded by many. "And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children or of strangers? And he said, of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free."

The argument here made use of by our divine Master is as follows: the money collected for the use of the temple is, properly speaking, a tribute which God imposes for the reparation of his own house, and which, as such, is to be collected after the manner of other tributes. Now the kings of the earth exact no tribute from their own children or near

connections, but only from their subjects and those that are not of their household. Therefore, in the present instance, God will not exact this tribute from his only Son, but will exempt him from it, together with his disciples. "But that we may not scandalize them," added Jesus, "go to the sea, and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for me and thee." This tribute was collected per head throughout Judea for the repairs of the temple, and amounted for each person that was twenty years old to a piece of silver of the weight of two drachmas, about fifteen-pence English. A stater, or shekel, was equivalent to two di-drachmas, or four drachmas, and was the tribute to be paid for two persons, being about two shillings and sixpence of our money. We may learn from this example of Christ our Lord to forego occasionally our strict rights, so far as to suffer some temporal loss, in order thereby to prevent or do away any ill-founded scandal which weak persons might otherwise take, even from our most innocent actions.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE FIRST DISPUTE AMONG THE APOSTLES CONCERNING PRIMACY
—SCANDAL TO BE AVOIDED. MATT. XVIII. 1—14. MARK
IX. 33—49. LUKE IX. 46—48.

WHILST they were upon their road into Judea, an altercation took place among the Apostles, which afforded Jesus an opportunity of giving them, and all succeeding Christians, several important lessons, such as might regulate their conduct, both with regard to themselves and to their neighbours. No part of the foregoing prediction of Jesus concerning what was to befall him seems to have struck the Apostles more

forcibly than that of his future resurrection. This they failed not to interpret of his entering into the full possession of his temporal kingdom. "And" hence "there entered a thought into them which of them should be greater" in this new and glorious state which they figured to themselves. Each one, it seems, aimed at the possession of the first dignities, and urged with earnestness the superiority of his respective claim. They were thus deeply engaged in conversation upon this topic amongst themselves: "But Jesus," though "seeing the thoughts of their hearts, did not interrupt them until they reached Capharnaum, whither they were going. And when they were in the house, he asked them: What did you treat of in the way? But they" were ashamed at the recollection of what had passed, and "held their peace; for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest. And sitting down," as it were, to decide their differences by his authority, "he called the twelve." Wherefore, "at that hour the disciples," who had been silent before, and were now compelled to speak, "came to Jesus," and interrogated him only in general, instead of enforcing each their personal pretensions, "saying: Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? He saith to them: If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all. And calling to him a little child," perhaps three or four years old, "he set him in the midst of them, by him, whom when he had embraced, he saith to them," proposing him as a model of humility to those who were disputing concerning the first rank in the kingdom: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" for it is destined only for those who resemble these little ones in innocence and humility. "Who-soever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is greater in the kingdom of heaven," because more conformable to me here on earth. In effect, these humble souls who are little in their own eyes, are so closely united to me,

that "whosoever shall receive one such child as this, in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. For he that is the lesser amongst you," by humility, "he is the greater" in my heavenly kingdom. "And John answering, said : Master," if thou receivest thus all whatever is done in thy name, we have been guilty of a fault : for "we saw a certain man casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us, and is not of the number of thy disciples. And Jesus," repressing his indiscreet zeal, "said to him : Do not forbid him : for there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me ;" on the contrary, he cannot fail to confess that power by virtue of which he worketh miracles. Wherefore no longer oppose those who act in my name, although they are not with you. "For he that is not against you is for you ;" and with greater reason, he who labours with you in destroying the power of the devil is to be considered as favourable to you ; and shall accordingly receive the reward of his labour, however small it may be. "For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." He leaves them therefore to infer that this exorcist, whom they had reprimanded, was rather to be rewarded, since by driving out the devils in the name of Jesus, he had promoted his honour and advanced his interest.

Jesus now proceeds to treat of the sin of scandal, which consists in giving occasion to another's sin, by bad example, evil advice, or any other means. In few words, he shows the enormity of this sin, the almost unavoidable necessity of its being committed, considering the weakness and wickedness of the world ; the eternal punishment due to it ; and lastly, he points out proper remedies against it. "And whosoever," says he, describing the enormity of this crime, "shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me," either by evil example, advice, or encouragement, "it were

better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of these little ones. (Luke xvii. 1, 2). Take heed," therefore, "to yourselves." So dreadful a menace most certainly calls for all our care and attention, lest by our words or actions we become a stumbling-block to others, by drawing them into sin. "And he said to his disciples: Woe to the world because of scandals. It is impossible," indeed, "that scandals should not come," so great is the corruption of the world and the frailty of those who live in it. Wherefore it must needs be that scandals come.

"But nevertheless," says Christ, "wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh:" and then he proceeds to describe the punishments he may expect in another life, in the following terms: "And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell into unquenchable fire, where their worm," or remorse of conscience, "dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee," by carrying thee into bad company, and to forbidden pleasures, "cut it off: it is better for thee to enter lame into everlasting life, than, having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. For every one of" them "shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt." In these last words he represents the damned as victims burning to the glory of God's justice, and as such they must be prepared with the same ceremonies as were all other victims. Now every victim the law commanded to be *salted* (Lev. ii. 13). And thus, in a manner peculiar to their situation, the damned must likewise be salted; and it is this singular quality or property of hell-fire, which, by constantly renew-

ing the substance it devours, constitutes the eternity of their punishment.

Jesus now offers to them a resource against this dreadful evil of scandal, and he finds it again in the nature of salt, which is an emblem of true wisdom, which should render them incorruptible in their morals, as that of hell renders the damned incorruptible in their torments. In this sense he declares that "salt is good," because, as it rendered the victims agreeable to God, so true wisdom, represented by it, preserves our souls from the corruption of sin, and makes them pleasing in the divine sight: "but if the salt," says he, "becomes unsavoury, wherewith will you season it?" As nothing will restore it, when corrupted, to its original efficacy, so if they, who by their calling are designed to counteract the natural tendency of mankind to corruption, become themselves equally corrupt, through a vain emulation for grandeur and preferment, with what other salt can these be restored to their sound state? Wherefore "have salt in you" which is good; labour for that true wisdom of which it is the emblem; and "have peace among you," by means of this divine wisdom, and by avoiding carefully these empty disputes concerning pre-eminence, which can only serve to create mischief and dissension.

As to the authors of scandal, the remedy for them is to entertain a great esteem and religious respect even for the least of those who believe in Jesus; for the ruin caused by scandals is owing to the little esteem and regard men have for souls, as if their eternal loss were not chargeable on those who occasion it by their bad example. Wherefore to inspire the respect for the souls of others, Christ says: "See that you despise not one of these little ones. For I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." Jesus leaves us infer, that since the angels are thus deeply interested in the preservation of the souls confided to their care, they will certainly not allow the authors of their damnation to go unpunished, but will

loudly call for vengeance upon them at the tribunal of God.

A second reason for esteeming these souls is that, after their being *lost by sin*, Jesus came down purposely to seek them, and to withdraw them from their errors. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Since the object of his incarnation and death was the salvation of souls, how can it be supposed that he will not take vengeance on those who frustrate the fruits of his sufferings, by causing the damnation of those for whom he died.

Jesus explains this infinite love which he bears to the souls of mankind by the example of a shepherd. "What think you," says he, "if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it happen that he find it: amen I say to you, he rejoiceth the more for *that* than for the ninety-nine that went not astray;" because in its regard he has a particular subject of joy, which the others afford not, viz. that of having found it again when lost and gone astray. The application of this allegory is obvious. Jesus is the shepherd, who, leaving his flock behind him in heaven, that is, innumerable armies of angels, came down upon earth purposely to seek after one lost sheep, viz. our human nature, gone astray, and lost by the sin of our first parents; and it is from this redemption or reparation of mankind, effected by himself, at the dear price of his own sufferings and death, that he feels a greater degree of joy than from the faithful perseverance of the angels in heaven. "In like manner," says Christ, we may infer that "it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish:" since, to effect their salvation, he sent down even his only Son into the world; and consequently he will not fail to take just vengeance upon all those who, by their bad example, contribute to frustrate his most gracious designs.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

FRATERNAL CORRECTION—THE KEYS PROMISED—INJURIES TO BE FORGIVEN—WE ARE TO CONSIDER OURSELVES AS USEFUL SERVANTS. MATT. XVIII. 15—35. LUKE XVII. 3—10.

AFTER having treated of the sin of scandal as an offence which regards the spiritual goods of grace and salvation, the connection of Christ's discourse seemed to require that he should next treat of injuries which we receive either in our reputation or in our corporal goods, whether such injuries originate from inconsiderateness, frailty, or malice. These are what he touches upon in the sequel.

After supposing the necessity of reparation on the part of the aggressor, Jesus establishes the obligation of forgiving the injury on the part of the person aggrieved in the following terms. "Look well to yourselves: if thy brother sin against thee," go and "rebuke him; and if he do penance, forgive him" the injury he has committed. "And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day be converted unto thee, saying: I repent: forgive him." If on the contrary, he repent not of his fault, but continue obstinate in his malice, he then stands in need of the correction of a third person, in order to extricate him from his criminal state. For we may observe that there are three degrees of correction, all of them equally proceeding from a spirit of charity and zeal for the offending party, and divested of all rancour and revenge; yet each of them distinguished by a different degree of severity. The first degree is mentioned above, which is that the injured party must speak to his aggressor *privately*, and remind him of the injury received. "Go," says Christ, "and rebuke him between thee and him alone." This first step is the most pacific and conciliating; for whilst it tends to the correction of the fault, it spares the confusion which a more public reprimand would cause to the aggressor, and thus affords no

plea for his obstinately justifying a bad action, which perhaps the presence of others might urge him to do. "If he shall hear thee," and attend to this mild correction, "thou shalt gain thy brother" to God, to thyself, and to himself, who would otherwise have been lost in all these several respects.

The second degree is, that, "if he will not hear thee," through a spirit of rancour and obstinacy, thou give him a second correction: and in this case "take with thee one or two more" persons of respectability, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand." These are not called in to prove his fault, which may perhaps have been a secret, or at least not known to them, in which case they could bear no testimony against him. They are therefore appealed to, not as witnesses to prove the injury committed, but as friends to give a sanction to the plaintiff's cause by the weight of their authority, and to effect a reconciliation by their persuasive arguments; or otherwise, to bear witness in the face of the Church, that everything has been done which charity required; and that if all this prove ineffectual, it now belongs to the Church to take up the cause.

The third degree of correction, therefore, becomes necessary when the offender refuses to listen to you, or to the witnesses called in: for, "if he will not hear them," says Christ, "tell the Church," or that prelate who in your regard is the representative of the Church, and who, by canonical admonitions, must urge him to give you due satisfaction. "And if he will not hear the Church," speaking to him through the voice of its pastor, "let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican;" that is, as a person with whom, after such solemn denunciation, all religious communication and intimacy must cease; that so this mark of infamy may tend to heal this disordered sheep, or at least preserve the rest of the flock from the contagion of his example. But lest public and obstinate sinners might treat the sentence of their pastors with contempt, Jesus here most

solemnly engages to ratify whatever they shall decree. "Amen I say to you, whatever you shall bind upon earth," either in the tribunal of penance, or in the outward court of ecclesiastical polity, "it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth," by the sentence of absolution, "shall be loosed also in heaven." These two important branches of ecclesiastical power are justly to be considered as powerful means of bringing sinners to repentance; the former, by intimidating them under the dread of being for ever cut off from the body of Jesus Christ, on account of obstinacy, and the latter, by attracting them to their duty, through a desire and well-grounded hope of being thus reinstated in grace, and of recovering their former rank in the Church.

What Christ adds is a confirmation of the preceding promise. For to show more forcibly that the sentences thus pronounced upon earth will be ratified in heaven, he assures them that, even exclusive of their judicial decisions in council, he will comply likewise with the vows and prayers of two or three individuals. "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall agree upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together *in my name*, there I am in the midst of them:" and Peter was forcibly struck with what Jesus had decided concerning our treatment of an offending brother, which was to pardon him upon his repentance, though he should offend us seven times a day. A condescension of this extent appeared to him somewhat unreasonable, and beyond all bounds. "Then Peter came to him, and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times;" which shows that we must forgive the offences of our brethren to an unlimited extent.

To point out more clearly the truth and equity of this

decision, Jesus spoke to his disciples the following parable. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents," that is, an immense sum: "and as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that," according to the custom of those times, "he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But the man," convinced of the justice of the sentence, and knowing he had nothing to hope for but from the mercy and clemency of his lord, "falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him" the trifling debt of "a hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their master all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturer until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

The foregoing parable represents to us the severity with which God will scrutinize our conduct towards our neighbour. Divesting it of the metaphorical imagery of farmers, debtors, and sales, we may here consider a vindictive person under four various circumstances: 1. Under the weight of innumerable sins committed against Almighty God. 2. As hav

ing been gratuitously admitted to a reconciliation with his offended majesty. 3. As guilty of the blackest ingratitude. 4. As suffering the just and rigorous chastisement of his crimes.

The followers of Jesus might perchance flatter themselves that, after so great an effort of virtue as that of pardoning injuries, nothing more would be required of them. Jesus, however (Luke xvii. 7), undeceives us in this respect, by an example drawn from our own conduct in the ordinary occurrences of life. "But which of you having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say to him when he is come from the field : immediately go, sit down to meat. And will not rather say to him : Make ready my supper, and gird thyself, and serve me, whilst I eat and drink ; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink ? Doth he thank that servant for doing the things which he commanded him ? I think not. So you also," when you have forgiven injuries from your hearts, and returned good for evil, which I may compare to tilling the soil and feeding the cattle, yet must you not expect that God will be satisfied with your conduct if you omit other essential duties. No, you must follow the example of this servant, who, after having worked during the day, had yet to prepare and attend at his master's table ; in like manner you must continue to do good works, which are, as it were, a meat highly pleasing to God, who is your heavenly Master ; and therefore "when you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say : We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which we ought to do." I say unprofitable servants, not in your own regard, but in respect of God, who stands not in need of your services, and who can easily have that performed by others which he is pleased to require at your hands.

CHAPTER LXIX.

JESUS CHRIST DEPARTS FROM GALILEE. MATT. XIX. 1.
MARK^c X. 1. JOHN VII. 1—11.

JESUS delivered the discourse of the preceding chapter to his Apostles at Capharnaum, and probably in the house of Peter's mother-in-law. He had now constantly resided in Galilee, and had only shown himself at Jerusalem during very short periods of time, viz. on his being summoned thither by the stated solemn festivals. His relations and family connections were displeased at his not showing himself more in Judea, where, according to their ideas, he would have gained more credit to himself, and reflected more honour upon them, than in a distant province. As therefore the feast of the Tents was now approaching, which was one of the three festivals when the Jews were obliged by the law to appear before the Lord at Jerusalem, they embraced that opportunity to press Jesus, by various reasons, to quit his obscure residence in Galilee and exchange it for Judea. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these words, the feast of the Jews called the Tabernacles was at hand. And his brethren," that is, his kindred, "said to him: Pass from hence and go into Judea; that thy disciples also may see thy" wonderful "works which thou dost: for there is no man that doth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If" then "thou do these" wonderful "things, manifest thyself to the world," by doing them at Jerusalem, where the Jews, assembled from all parts, will be witnesses of them, and will not fail to spread the report thereof throughout the whole world.

Under the cloak of these plausible reasons, they concealed the strong desire they had of raising their own names from obscurity by the fame of his miracles. "For" these "his brethren did not believe in him" in a proper manner, so as to relish his maxims of humility and modesty; and as they

were not persuaded of his being the Son of God, they concluded that he was not insensible to the esteem of men. "Then Jesus said to them: My time is not yet come" for going to Jerusalem. For, at the present moment, it behoved Christ to absent himself from that city on account of the many enemies whom he had raised against himself by his preaching. Since in his doctrines he uniformly condemned the practices of the world, as leading to damnation, he was become the object of its hatred; and therefore it became necessary that he should take certain precautions respecting his journey to Jerusalem. "But your time," said Christ to his relations, "is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival, but I go not up to this festival day" as yet: "because my time is not yet accomplished." These words afforded his relations sufficient reason to conclude that his going thither would be attended with great danger to his person; and we may hence conjecture that the Jews had formed some design against him as soon as he should appear in Jerusalem. "When he had said these things, he himself staid" behind "in Galilee," for a few days, in order that thereby his entry into Jerusalem might not take place until about the midst of the festival, which lasted during eight days. "But after his brethren were gone up, then he also departed from Galilee, and went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret," that he might not provoke the malice of his enemies. Thus we see that Christ was pleased to avoid persecution, not by interposing his power, but by withdrawing himself till God's appointed time was come; to teach us to wait for that time also which he shall ordain, and not rashly to expose ourselves to dangers.

CHAPTER LXX.

CHRIST HEALS TEN LEPERS. LUKE XVII. 11—19.

“AND it came to pass as he was going to Jerusalem, he went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town” on the borders of these two provinces, “there met him ten men that were lepers.” Of these nine were Jews and one a Samaritan; and notwithstanding their natural antipathy and difference as to points of religion, they were travelling together, being all afflicted with a similar grievous disorder, and all equally in search of relief. “Who,” therefore, seeing Jesus passing by, “stood afar off,” out of respect, and lest they should communicate their contagious uncleanness to others. “And they lifted up their voice, saying,” in a suppliant manner: “Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us. Whom, when he saw, he said: Go show yourselves to the priests;” for these were authorised by the law to judge of the leprosy, and to restore such as were cured to their former rank in society, after various expiations and sacrifices. Jesus, by thus sending them to the priests previously to their being healed, would try their faith and submission. “And it came to pass as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back with a loud voice, glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks; and this was a Samaritan.” The other nine persons pursued their journey without returning to their benefactor. “And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? There is no one found to return and give thanks to God but this stranger,” of whom it was less to be expected than of the Jews, who were the children of Abraham and of the patriarchs.

In these few words he displays their ingratitude: 1. By stating the benefit received in an equal degree by all the ten lepers, who consequently ought to have showed an equal

gratitude towards their common benefactor. 2. By remarking the different condition of their persons; for as these nine were Jews, they ought, as such, to have been more enlightened, more religious, and more sensible of the favours received from God than a Samaritan, who however surpassed them in these several qualities. “And” Jesus “said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.” These words were applied more to the healing of his soul, hitherto infected with the leprosy of schism and of sins, than to that of his body, which had been already healed.

In the person of this Samaritan we behold a model of gratitude worthy of our imitation. The moment he is delivered from his misfortune, he is actuated by the most lively sense of the benefit conferred on him. In returning thanks to his benefactor, the Evangelist remarks, he also glorified God, whom he acknowledged to be the author of his cure. When man confers on us a benefit, let us remember that it was God who inspired him with the thought, who gave him the will, and who furnished him with the means of relieving us. As God is our principal benefactor, to him our thanks are principally due; our gratitude ought to commence with him and terminate in him. In the order of nature, of fortune, and of grace, what is there which we have not received from him? But if gratitude be a general obligation incumbent upon all, it is particularly required of those who, by the Divine goodness, have been delivered from the state of sin, and re-established in the state of grace; who of enemies of God are become his friends, and who, after being covered with the hideous leprosy of sin, have been happily cleansed from it by repentance.

PART V.

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES. JOHN VII. 11—53.

THE feast of the Tabernacles or Tents, which was one of the three great annual festivals, was celebrated upon the fifteenth day of the seventh month Tizri, that is, at the full moon of the said month, in commemoration of the Israelites sojourning in the wilderness, and living in tents for the space of forty years. Our Saviour assisted at this festival, and remained in Judea or its vicinity the six following months, until the ensuing Passover, when he was to suffer death; and he seems not to have returned any more into Galilee until after his resurrection.

The various miraculous cures which he performed upon diseased persons on the Sabbath day, particularly that of the paralytic at the fish-pond, which happened eighteen months before; his conversing with publicans and sinners; and other supposed crimes of a similar nature, had alienated from him the minds of the principal persons in Jerusalem, who had a greater degree of pride and stiffness than the Galileans. "The Jews, therefore," of this description, "sought him on the festival day, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning him. For some said: He is a good man. And others said: No; but he seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of him" to defend his cause, "for fear of the Jews." By his not appearing in public, he allowed this first ferment to subside. "Now about the midst of the feast," which lasted eight days, "Jesus went into the temple, and taught: and" he did this in so masterly a manner, that "the

Jews wondered, saying: How doth this man know letters," that is, the Holy Scriptures, "having never learned" them? The priests thus expressed their astonishment at his having acquired so profound a knowledge in the scriptures, and the mysteries contained in them, since they had never witnessed him amongst the number of their disciples, and since in no other part of Judea was the scriptural science publicly taught. Jesus, although he might not have heard what they said amongst themselves upon this subject, yet gave a sufficient answer to their objection.

The truth of his doctrine he established upon the strength of the three following reasons: 1. The authority of his heavenly Father. 2. The personal experience and conviction of his hearers, to which he appealed. 3. His own disinterestedness. Wherefore, on this occasion, "Jesus answered them and said: My doctrine is not mine," that is, the invention of my own fancy, "but his that sent me. If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself:" for he shall find in it so much light and equity, he shall taste so much comfort and sweetness in his soul, that he shall no longer entertain the least doubt as to God's being the sole author of it. "He that speaketh of himself," and uttereth his own devices without being sent by God, "seeketh his own glory," and is to be esteemed an impostor: "but he that seeketh" only "the glory of him that sent him, he is true; and there is no injustice" or deceit "in him." He now proceeds to justify the miraculous cures which he had wrought on the Sabbath, especially that which he had performed at the fish-pond; and which had so irritated the Scribes and Pharisees, that they formed the design of putting him to death as a violator of the law. Upon this subject he brings an unanswerable argument in his favour from their own individual conduct. "Did not Moses," said he to them, "give you the law" of the Sabbath? "and yet none of you keepeth" the letter of "the law;" for you make no scruple of giving circumcision

on the Sabbath-day, and of healing the person who has received it. "Why seek you" then "to kill me," because I have healed a man on the Sabbath-day? "The multitude," far from entertaining so bad a design against Jesus, were hurt at this reproach; to which they "answered and said: Thou hast a devil" that suggests such a thought, "who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said to them: One work I have done" on the Sabbath, "and you all wonder" at it to this day, as if I had been guilty of a crime. "Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers,) and on the Sabbath-day you circumcise a man," in obedience to this law. "If," therefore, "a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day," and they labour to heal the wound inflicted by this rite, yet "so that the law of Moses be not broken, are you angry at me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance" and according to your prejudices, "but" with equity and candour "give a just judgment."

Nothing could be alleged in reply to the preceding argument, and consequently all remained silent. "Some therefore of Jerusalem," well aware of the rancorous disposition of the principal Jews against the person of Jesus, "said: Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And behold he speaketh openly" in the temple itself, "and they say nothing to him: are our chief men convinced indeed that he is the Christ? But" others, who pretended to a more profound knowledge of the law, declared that he could not be the Messiah. "We know this man," said they, "whence he is; but when the Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is." He will appear on a sudden before the eyes of mankind, as if he had dropped from the heavens, and in so secret a manner, that no man shall know either his parents or his family connections. "Jesus, therefore," knowing what they said of him, and judging the objection to be of some consequence, "cried out in the temple teaching and saying:" What, "you

both know me," you say, "and you know whence I am? and" yet "I am not come of myself," nor do I derive my origin from that person whom you suppose my father: "but he that sent me is true," just, and faithful, "whom you know not," otherwise you might naturally conclude that the person sent by him is so likewise. "I know him because I am from him," being born of him from all eternity, "and he hath sent me" to you, to accomplish the promises made to your fathers. Hence he left them to infer, that even according to the principles which they themselves had established, he had that distinguishing mark of the Messiah which consisted in being descended from an unknown origin. The Pharisees were still more irritated at these words, and "they sought therefore to apprehend him; and no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. But of the people many believed in him, and said: When the Christ cometh, shall he do more miracles than these which this man doth?" why then should we refuse to acknowledge him as the Messiah? "The Pharisees heard the people muttering these things concerning them: and the rulers and Pharisees," fearful lest their example should be followed by others, "sent ministers to apprehend him. Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go to him that sent me. You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither you cannot come. The Jews therefore said among themselves: Whither will he go that we shall not find him? will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is the meaning of what he said: You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am you cannot come? And on the last and great day of the festival, Jesus stood" in the midst of the temple, "and cried out, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," that is, let him come to me with a sincere faith, and he shall not fail to drink so as to have all his desires and longings after truth completely satisfied. "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith (Joel ii. 28;

Ezech. xxxvi. 15), rivers of living water shall flow from out of him," and shall thus be imparted to others. In other words, he shall pour forth torrents of the words of salvation, which shall be diffused in copious streams over the minds of his hearers, so as to produce in them a similar faith and a similar attachment to the truth. "Now this he said of the" holy "Spirit which they should receive who believed in him: for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" by his ascension into heaven. "Of this multitude, therefore, when they heard these words of his, some said: This is the prophet indeed. Others said: This is the Christ: but some said: Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the scripture say: That Christ cometh out of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, where David was born? So there arose a dissension among the people because of him; and some of them would have apprehended him: but no man laid hands on him. The ministers therefore," who had been sent to arrest him, "came to the chief Priests and the Pharisees. And they said to them: Why have you not brought him? The ministers answered: Never did man speak like this man," with so much grace, strength, and authority. "The Pharisees, therefore, answered them: Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees?" which they said, thus contrasting the example of persons both grave and learned in the law with the ignorant people. "But this multitude," said they, "that knoweth not the law, are accursed," and utterly incompetent to judge in a case of such nicety. "Nicodemus (he that came to Jesus by night), who was one of them," not a little nettled at this reproach of ignorance, "said to them: Doth our law judge any man, unless it first hear him and know what he doth?" He thus, with great force of argument, and with perfect safety to himself, defended the cause of Jesus, by alleging in his favour merely the claims of natural equity, such as an accused person has a right to expect even from his inveterate enemies, and much more

from his judges. They however refused to listen to so fair a plea, but answered and said: "Art thou also a Galilean? Search the scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not." The meeting after this was shortly broken up, "and every man returned to his own house."

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE ADULTERESS IS SUFFERED TO GO UNCONDEMNED. JOHN
VIII. 1—11.

"AND Jesus going out of the temple, went unto Mount Olivet," so called from the olives wherewith it abounded, and there passed the night with his disciples. As this place was at the distance of about a mile and a half from Jerusalem, and consequently not farther off than it was lawful to travel on the Sabbath-day, he chose it for his ordinary place of resort, and it was here that Judas betrayed him. "And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and sitting down he taught them" the way of salvation. Whilst thus employed he was interrupted by a criminal suit that was brought before him; and such was his admirable decision on the occasion, that the accusers, though supported by the law, were yet confounded by truth itself, whilst the guilty party, though condemned by law, was nevertheless set at liberty by her own accusers. "And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery," who had probably been cited by her injured husband before their tribunal; "and they set her in the midst" of the assembly: "and said to him, Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou? And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse him." For if he condemned this woman to death, they flattered themselves that he would forfeit that

popularity which his mild and humane conduct had hitherto gained him ; if, on the contrary, he should absolve her from the guilt as well as the punishment of her crime, which was what they wished and expected from his known mild and compassionate character, in this case they would have the fairest handle to convict him of a violation of the law of Moses, and this violation would ever afterwards serve as an unanswerable argument against those persons who supported his cause. “But Jesus, bowing himself down,” as it were declining to decide in so odious a cause, “wrote with his finger upon the ground” certain characters, the purport of which is unknown. “When therefore they continued asking him, he raised himself up, and said to them,” with a circumspection which showed he was aware of their malicious designs : “he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again stooping down, he wrote on the ground,” as it were to give them an opportunity of retiring, and of thus avoiding the confusion which they deserved. This wonderful sentence pronounced by Jesus, whilst it preserved to the law of Moses its due authority, formed a happy union of the most impartial justice with the most unbounded mercy ; it found out the means of saving this guilty woman in the very crimes of her accusers ; it overwhelmed them with shame, whilst, in the main, it was a decision in their favour ; and lastly, whilst it allowed them to inflict the punishment appointed for adultery, it yet tied up their hands from inflicting it, since, in case of her suffering death, they who deserved a similar punishment, were certainly excluded from being her executioners. “But they, hearing this” unexpected answer, and fearing lest Jesus might now proceed to give such further detail of their own sinful lives as might fill them with confusion, “went out one by one, beginning at the eldest,” whose vicious habits in this respect would have met with the least indulgence at the tribunal of the public : “and Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst” of the

people, her accusers being gone out. "Jesus then raising himself up, said to her: Woman, where are they that accused thee? hath no one condemned thee? (*i. e.* judicially). Who replied: No one, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee." Thus he forgave her the punishment she had deserved; but to show that in pardoning her guilt he meant not to give a sanction to her crime, he added, "Go, and now sin no more." By this example, our blessed Saviour teaches us to look into ourselves, and to examine our own conduct, rather than censure that of our neighbour. With respect to others, men oftentimes have a horror of those gross sins that strike their senses, and take no notice of their own internal sins, which are perhaps more heinous in the eyes of a pure spirit. Instead of harshly condemning the faults of others, let us humble our souls before God, by whose mercy we have hitherto been preserved from falling into sins still more enormous. If we expect to be treated with lenity in our misfortunes, we should not forget to show that lenity to others. Lenity is one of the most effectual methods to make the delinquent sensible of his fault. The lenity that Jesus Christ showed on this occasion had, without doubt, a more salutary effect upon the adulteress's mind than all the severity of the Mosaic law. It is the spirit of lenity and charity which the Church, in imitation of her Spouse, has adopted with regard to her children. She turns her back upon none, however grievous their sins may be; she beholds them with the eye of a tender mother, she invites them to their christian duties; she stands with open arms to receive the penitent, and absolves them from their guilt the moment she is assured of the sincerity of their repentance.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

JESUS PREACHES AGAIN IN THE TEMPLE, AND JUSTIFIES HIS
DOCTRINE AGAINST THE PHARISEES. JOHN VIII. 12—59.

THE scene just recited had interrupted the discourse which Jesus was making to the people: he now, therefore, resumed it. “Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying: I am the light of the world,” by my doctrine and the example of my life, in order to conduct those souls to life who before were involved in darkness: “he,” therefore, “that followeth me,” by believing my words, and by imitating my actions, “walketh not in” the “darkness” of error and vice, “but shall have the light of life;” that is, he shall be truly enlightened, and safely conducted to a life of eternal happiness, by means of that life of true justice which now causes him *truly* to live in the eyes of God. “The Pharisees therefore said to him: Thou givest testimony of thyself: thy testimony is not true,” and ought not to be admitted as such. In answer to this plausible objection, Jesus gives them to understand that, after so many proofs of his divinity, by the wonderful miracles which he had wrought, the testimony he bears in his own behalf is perfectly admissible, because the maxim, that a man is a suspected witness in his own case, is out of the question in his regard, since he, as God, was incapable of deceit. “Jesus” therefore “answered and said to them: Although I give testimony of myself, my testimony is true: for I know whence I came,” and that my origin is from God, by an eternal generation, “and whither I go,” viz. that I am, after the end or termination of this my mission, to return again to the bosom of God, to sit at his right-hand, to enjoy his glory, and to draw thither all such persons as shall be obedient to him: “but you know not whence I come, or whither I go,” the light of your senses not reaching to such sublime mysteries; and hence you receive not my testimony.

“You judge” of me “according to the flesh,” and merely by outward appearances; “I judge not any man” in this manner. “And if I judge” of myself, “my judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me:” it is he who authorises, by his testimony, *that* which I bear of myself; “and in your law it is written, that the testimony of two men is true (Deut. xvii. 6). And” since “I am one that give testimony of myself, and the Father that sent me giveth testimony of me” likewise, therefore our testimony is true according to the law, and you are obliged to admit it as such. If, in the present instance, Jesus were merely a common man, these two witnesses could be considered in no other light than as *one*; and, on that supposition, the argument here adduced would be inconclusive, since, in the testimony which he bears to himself, he who gives evidence, and who is the object of that evidence, would be precisely one and the same person; which would render the testimony of no avail by that rule which Jesus himself had acknowledged. But there being in Jesus two natures perfectly distinct, he here as God gives testimony to himself as man, viz. that he is in this quality the visible light of the world, without indicating thereby a diversity of persons.

The Jews feigned a desire of seeing his Father, under the pretext that, being already acquainted with one of the witnesses, viz. himself, they now required only to see the other witness, in order to have a full and entire conviction. “They said therefore to him: Where is thy Father,” that we may receive his testimony? “Jesus,” well aware of their duplicity, “answered: Neither me do you know nor my Father: if you did know me” to be his Son, proceeding from him by an eternal generation, “perhaps you would know my Father also. These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple,” and surrounded by a great multitude of his enemies; “and” yet “no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come,” when he was to be delivered into their custody. “Jesus then,” find-

ing that his instructions were little attended to, proceeded to utter terrible menaces against the Jews, and he “again said to them : I go” from you [alluding to his approaching death, of which they were to be the authors and perpetrators], “and you shall seek me” without being able to find me, “and” thus “you shall die in your sins.” For “whither I go you cannot come,” viz. to the eternal mansions above. “The Jews therefore said : Will he kill himself, because he said, Whither I go you cannot come?” hereby implying that they would be loth to follow him in so rash an action. “And he said to them : You are from beneath,” and have no other ideas or inclinations but such as are earthly : “I am from above : you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins,” since you can only be delivered from them by a true faith in me. “They said therefore to him,” on hearing this menace : “Who art thou ? Jesus said to them :” I am “the beginning,” the cause and author of all things, who am now become man, and who also speak unto you ; and this is what I said at the beginning, that you are to believe in me in order to be delivered from your sins. “Many things I have to speak and to judge of you, but” I shall at present content myself with saying : “He that sent me is true” and just in his judgments : “and” that “the things I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world ;” so that in resisting my words you resist truth itself. “And they understood not that he called God his Father. Jesus therefore,” coming to the question they had proposed to him, viz. who he was, “said to them : When you shall have lifted up the Son of man” on the cross, and he shall be risen again, “then shall you know that I am *he*, and that I do” and say “nothing of myself ; but as the Father hath taught me, these things I speak. And he that sent me is with me, and he hath not left me alone : for I do always the things that please him.” Hence he plainly

showed that their ideas of him were erroneous, since they represented him to their imagination as an enemy of God, and as a possessed person, who spoke and acted under the immediate impulse and direction of the devil. "When he spake these things many believed in him." And "then Jesus," to encourage them to persevere in this faith, "said to those Jews who believed in him: If you continue" firm "in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth" more and more, in proportion as you shall act conformably to its injunctions; "and the truth," thus revealed to you, "shall make you free." They amongst his hearers who yet remained incredulous, were particularly offended at these last words of Jesus, which implied that they were in a state of slavery, and "they answered him: We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man: how sayest thou, you shall be free?" They here appear to have forgotten that their ancestors, who were equally of the race of Abraham, had long been slaves in Egypt and Assyria. "Jesus answered them," and confirmed what he had insinuated as to their slavery: "Amen, amen I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is a slave to sin;" as therefore you fall into sins of various kinds, according to your depraved inclinations, hence it follows that you are slaves to your respective sinful habits. "Now he that is a slave, abideth not in the house" of his master "for ever;" for he is either driven from it, as was Agar with her son, or is transferred over to other masters (insinuating hereby that they would one day be driven from the kingdom of God); "but the Son" of the family "abideth for ever" under his paternal roof. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed;" not by enjoying a mere civil liberty which you boast of, but a liberty of the soul, which consists not in serving either concupiscence, which reigns in you, or the devil, who adds fuel to it, but in serving God alone, your heavenly Father, who will render you for ever happy in the mansions of eternal bliss. "I

know," as well as you, "that you are the children of Abraham: but" I know likewise that you are the slaves of sin, since "you seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." In announcing to you the truth, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and you," in being desirous of putting me to death, "do the things that you have seen with your father. They answered," in a fierce and peremptory manner, "and said to him: Abraham is our father. Jesus saith to them: If you be the children of Abraham, do ye the works of Abraham;" imitate his faith and holy life. "But now you seek to kill me, a man who hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard from God: this Abraham did not," and therefore you are by no means the true children of Abraham. "You do the works of your father," who is of a very different description from Abraham. They now understood that Jesus spoke not of a filiation according to the flesh, but rather of a spiritual generation, such as showed itself by a similarity of manners; and as the crime of idolatry is, in the language of Scripture, a spiritual adultery, which the unfaithful soul is guilty of against God, her lawful Spouse, they declared in few words that they were not the fruit of a sacrilegious union of this description, and had not been trained up to idolatry either by the words or by the example of their fathers. "They said therefore to him: We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus therefore said to them: If God were your Father, you would indeed love me; for from God I proceeded and came; for I came not of myself, but he sent me. Why do you not know my speech?" it being only natural that one brother should know another by his accent and tone of voice, as well as by his features. The reason is, "because you cannot hear my word" with patience, on account of your hatred of me, though I speak truly the word of God. Therefore "you are of your father the devil," both in mind and in the resemblance of your actions; "and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer

from the beginning," by drawing our first parents into sin, and so occasioning their death, and that of all their posterity ; and you are so, in my regard, by seeking to take away my life : " and," moreover, " he stood not in the truth." This is manifest, because, since his fall, truth is not in him, but totally discarded from his mind. " When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But" you are his children ; for " if I say the truth " to you, " you believe me not," and only conceive a horror for my sacred doctrines. But " which of you shall convince me of sin," or of any falsehood ? " If," therefore, " I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me ? " Is it not because you are the children of the devil, and as such hate the truth that is announced to you ? " He that is " the child " of God, heareth the words of God," not only with his corporal ears, but with those of his heart, considering them as the food and sustenance of his spiritual life. " Therefore you hear them not, because you are not" the children of God. " The Jews therefore," touched to the quick by these reproaches, " answered and said to him : Do not we say well, that thou art a Samaritan," that is, an enemy of God's people, " and hast a devil" that inspires thee with these sentiments ? " Jesus answered," with great mildness : " I have not a devil : but I honour my Father," by referring all the glory of my actions to him as to their principal cause and author : " and you have dishonoured me," and have made my work the subject of derision and animosity against me. " But I seek not my own glory : there is one to seek it and judge " all your shameful outrages.

Having thus replied to the several objections which they had urged against him, Jesus resumes his discourse in favour of those who should remain steadfast in his doctrine ; and having already promised them true spiritual liberty, he adds what they may further expect from such fidelity in his service. " Amen, amen I say to you : If any man keep my

word, he shall not see death for ever ;” that is, the death of the soul, but shall escape that eternal misery prepared for the incredulous. “The Jews therefore,” understanding it of the death of the body, “said: Now we know that thou hast a ” familiar “devil,” which causes thee to hold out so delusive a promise. “Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets ” too “are ” long since “dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself ” as man, “my glory is nothing,” and you would have reason to reject it. But “it is my Father that glorifieth me,” by communicating to me his power, “of whom you say that he is your God. And ” yet “you have not known him: but I know him; and if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar: but I do know him, and do keep his word,” and observe his commandments with the greatest punctuality. As to what you ask me, whether I am greater than Abraham, I shall only say, that “Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day,” the day of my coming upon earth, as likewise the day of my glory, when I shall sit as judge of the living and the dead; “and he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am,” for as God I existed from all eternity. “They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus,” before they could execute their cruel design, “hid himself ” in the crowd, “and went out of the temple,” thus to escape their fury. In all probability he went, according to custom, to pass the night on Mount Olivet.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO A MAN BORN BLIND. JOHN IX. 1—41.

“AND Jesus passing by” the next day, gave a fresh proof of his divine power, by curing a man who had been blind from his very birth. In performing this miracle, he employed such means as in the common course of nature ought rather to have caused than removed blindness. The doctors of the law and the Pharisees, instead of being enlightened, were still more blinded by this miracle. The blind man, after recovering his sight, was able to confound, though not to cure, their strange blindness.

Wherefore Jesus returning to the city the day following, “saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?” This question, according to St. Cyril and Origen, may possibly have originated from the absurd opinion taught by some of the Pharisees, that the souls of virtuous persons, on their decease, pass into other bodies, and appear again in the world by a second birth, and under a new name; in this sense the above question implied that this blind man might, previous to his birth, have been guilty of some actual sin, whilst his soul animated a body distinct from that which now appeared before them in a state of blindness. With regard to the parents of the blind man, the question here addressed to Jesus was grounded upon that text of Exodus (xx. 5) which describes the Almighty as revenging the sins of parents upon their children to the third and fourth generation. It is to be remarked that original sin was here entirely out of the question, though in fact all our evils originate from it. “Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works” and power “of God should be made manifest in him.” For “I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night” of death “cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the

world, I am the light of the world," and therefore it behoves me to give light to this blind man, as a lively representation that I give spiritual light to the souls of men blinded by sin. "When he had said these words, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: Go wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, *sent*. He went, therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. The neighbours, therefore, and they who had seen him before, being a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: This is he. But others said: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened? He answered," with great candour and simplicity, for as yet he did not know his benefactor to be God: "That man who is called Jesus, made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash: and I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him: Where is he? He saith: I know not. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees asked him: How he had received his sight? But he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see." It is somewhat pleasant to observe the emotions caused by this palpable miracle in the minds of the Pharisees, who now were at a loss to find a plausible pretext for condemning it. They were divided into a variety of opinions on the subject. "Some therefore of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? They say therefore to the blind man again," feigning to refer the decision to him: "What sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes?" They flattered themselves that his answer might afford them some grounds for invalidating the truth of the miracle, if he did not express a due esteem for his miraculous cure, or if, overawed by the great number of the enemies of Jesus in the council before which

he stood, he should not dare to make an express declaration in his favour. "He," however, "replied," without fear or hesitation: "He is a prophet. The Jews then," suspecting a collusion between them, "did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that now saw, and asked them, saying: Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said: We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. Ask himself, he is of age; let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be" excommunicated and "put out of the synagogue; therefore did his parents say: He is of age, ask him." After the evidence thus given by the parents of the man, the council had sufficient reason to be satisfied as to the certainty of the fact: they however gave not the point up without a further investigation. "They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God," who is here present, and in whose sight thou speakest. But they waited not for his answer, and suggested to him that he ought now to avow his having obtained his eyesight by some other means, and to confess to the world that Jesus had prevailed upon him, by unlawful means, to declare him the author of the cure. "We know," said they, "that this man is a sinner," and consequently he cannot have performed a miraculous cure. The man, who saw not the depth of their malicious artifice, only confirmed what he had before asserted: "He said therefore to them: If he be a sinner I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;" and therefore am bound, by every tie of gratitude, to give glory to God, by thus openly confessing the truth.

As this honest bluntness of the man disconcerted all their

schemes, they had recourse to another expedient. They began to cross-examine him, hoping thereby to lead him into some contradiction, and of course to invalidate his testimony. "They said therefore to him: What did he to thee? how did he open thy eyes? He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard: why would you hear it again?" Thus, instead of giving them a direct answer to their question, lest they should twist his words to a wrong sense, he reproached them for their want of understanding, and of attention to what he had so plainly related. He even went so far as to turn them to ridicule. "Will you also," said he to them, "become his disciples," that you are so desirous of having a repetition of what you have already heard? Nothing in nature could have been more cutting to the proud and haughty Pharisees than the very shadow of such a suspicion. "They reviled him, therefore, and said: Be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not whence he is," nor who sent him, nor from whence he derives his doctrines, or that authority which he arrogates to himself in teaching. "The man answered," with a wonderful presence of mind, "and said to them: Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you," with all your learning, "know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God does not hear sinners," so as to grant them this power of working miracles in confirmation of error: "but if a man be a worshipper of God and perform his will, him he heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, he could not do anything" of this wonderful nature. As no satisfactory answer could be found to this reasoning, "they answered" it with abusive language, "and said: Thou wast wholly born in sin," as appears by the blindness in which thou wast born, "and dost thou teach us? And they" instantly "cast him out," thinking thus to have given a sufficient answer to his

argument. "Jesus heard that they had" thus "cast him out of the synagogue, and when he had found him, he said: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord: and falling down he adored him," with that sort of adoration which is due to God alone. "And Jesus said," with a happy allusion to his late blindness, and to that clear light which he now enjoyed: "I am come unto judgment into this world, that they who see not, may see: and they who see, may become blind;" in other words, that humble and simple persons, such as honestly avow their ignorance, may become enlightened by the light of the true faith, whilst they who flatter themselves with the idea of being the most enlightened and above instruction, become blind by their own darkness. "And some of the Pharisees who were with him heard" these words, and rightly judging that they were levelled at them, "they said unto him: Are we also blind? Jesus said to them: If you were blind," and sufficiently humble to acknowledge your ignorance, "you would not be liable to sin," because you would then seek the truth with sincerity, and the truth would not fail to enlighten you: "but now that you say, we see," and boast of your knowledge and wisdom, "your sin remaineth," because this presumption hinders you from seeking after the light which is necessary for you; falsely imagining that you have no need of it. Thrice happy, say the holy fathers, was the man who through his corporal blindness discovered the true light which enlightens every man who cometh into this world. He became not the adorer only, but also the defender of Jesus Christ against his enemies; unshaken by their threats, he boldly declared the truth, and silenced their captious arguments against it. The Jews cast him out of their synagogue; but Jesus received him into his communion, and made his heart the living temple of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER LXXV.

CHRIST DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE THE TRUE SHEPHERD.

JOHN X. 1—21.

IN the following discourse Jesus pointed out the several essential differences between a thief and a true shepherd, and then showed his just claim to the character of the latter.

The first difference is in the manner of election to the office of guarding the sheep. “Amen, amen I say to you; he that entereth not by the door,” that is, by a canonical election or promotion, “into the sheepfold, but climbeth up by another way,” by a window, or through a breach in the wall, viz. by means of injustice, or fraudulent and simoniacal practices, such as favour or partiality, or by making presents, all which are manifest infringements of the established rules, “the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door” of a regular appointment, “is the shepherd of the sheep.”

The second difference is, that “to him the porter openeth,” viz. the Holy Ghost opens the door to the true shepherd, and allows him access into the sheepfold, as being called thereto by God, who holds the door open to him in all his enterprises, and facilitates the execution of them by his divine assistance. He leaves it to be inferred, that neither God, nor a call from God, opens the door to the thief and the robber: the thief enters in only by fraud and imposition, and the robber enters in by high birth, riches, or influence.

The third difference is, that the true shepherd is known by his sheep, “and the sheep hear his voice,” which they readily distinguish from all other voices; because a soul enlightened from above, and imbued with a relish for the truth, easily knows its pastor by the conformity of his doctrine with that which she has already received. He thus hints to the Pharisees that they must not wonder if many of the Jews, after the example of the blind man,

should refuse to listen to them as to their masters, and should rather attach themselves to him, and become hearers of his word : the reason of which preference is, that they distinguish his voice, and are attracted by the truth, which they find not in the discourses of the Pharisees.

The fourth difference is, that the true shepherd knows, “and calleth his own sheep by name,” to see, as it were, that none be wanting. He applies himself to the wants of all in general, and of each in particular, evincing an equal care of all. It is far otherwise with the thief, who, as the sheep know him not, so likewise he knows not them, cares not for their wants, nor diseases, and so thinks not of applying the remedies suited to them ; in short, he allows them to perish, and is indifferent to their loss.

The fifth difference is, that the true shepherd “leadeth them out” into wholesome pastures ; that is, nourishes them with sound and orthodox doctrines, and causes them to drink of the pure waters of truth ; whilst, on the contrary, the thief leads the sheep to be butchered, or if perhaps he leads them to the pasture, he pays no attention whether they feed upon poisonous herbs or quench their thirst with infected waters.

The sixth difference is, that the true shepherd, “when he hath led out his own sheep, goeth before them” as their guide. He is the first to comply with all God’s commandments or counsels, thus proposing himself as a pattern for their imitation ; nor does he point out anything to be done by them, but what he is the first to perform himself. “And the sheep,” therefore, “follow him, because they know his voice,” which is the voice of truth. “But a stranger they follow not, but flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers,” which is ever the voice of error and deceit. “This proverb Jesus spoke to them,” in order to show that he was the true Pastor of God’s sheep, the Guide and Conductor of his people : “but they understood not what he spoke to them.” He now condescends to make

the application of it, both with regard to himself and to the false teachers who had gone before him; classing among the latter all such false prophets as had intruded themselves into the office of conducting the people of God. In this number he includes the Pharisees of that time, who, although the lawful successors of Moses, had now become false shepherds, by refusing to acknowledge that Messiah whom Moses had foretold. "Jesus therefore said to them again," and with the solemn asseveration of an oath: "Amen, amen I say to you, I am the door of the sheep," by which men may enter into the sheepfold of the Church, by faith in my name. But "all others, as many as have come" without a legal mission and authority, "are thieves and robbers, and the sheep hear them not. I am the door" of salvation: "by me, if any one enter in" to the Church, either as one of the sheep by faith, or as a shepherd by a lawful vocation, "he shall be saved: and he shall go in and out, and shall find pastures" of wholesome food. "The thief cometh for no other end but to steal, to kill, and to destroy," by the poison of false doctrines: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" now under the gospel than under the law.

Jesus then proceeded to apply to his own person the several peculiar marks of the good shepherd contained in this parable, pointing out the two characteristics which in a particular manner distinguish him from the hireling. "I am the good shepherd," says he. "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep," if necessary, to defend them against wolves, that is, against false teachers, who preach up heresy and schism. "But the hireling," or mercenary pastor, "and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep. And the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling; and he hath no care for the sheep:" but feeds them with a view only to his own profit, without any principle of affection

towards his master, or any desire or zeal for the good of the flock. "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and" as this mutual knowledge produces in us an infinite love, so this affectionate knowledge which I have for my sheep, inspires me with so great a love for them, that "I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have," distinct from this little flock in Judea, and scattered amongst the Gentiles: "them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" calling them to the true faith; "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd," for the Jewish people and the Gentile world shall coalesce together, and form but one common church. "Therefore doth the Father love me: because I lay down my life" for the sheep; and this I do only for a short time, "that I may take it up again" by a glorious resurrection. And I lay it down freely and of my own accord; "for no man taketh it away from me" by force: "but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Thus am I equally free both in suffering death and in rising again to life; and "this commandment," or commission, "have I received of my Father. A dissension rose again among the Jews by reason of these words, and many of them said: He hath a devil, and is mad, why do you hear him? Others said: These are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can the devil open the eyes of the blind?"

CHAPTER LXXVI.

CHRIST SENDS THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES TO WORK
MIRACLES AND TO PREACH. LUKE X. 1—24. MATT.
XI. 25—30.

It was but reasonable that the faith should be preached to Judea, as well as to Galilee, and therefore, "after these

things, the Lord appointed also other seventy-two: and he sent them two and two," that one might be a help and comfort to the other, and their testimony of greater force. They were sent "before him," in order to prepare the way, "into every city and place" of Judea, "whither he himself was to come;" each division having a determinate district allotted it. Before their departure he addressed to them a discourse, wherein he first points out the proper disposition of mind which they ought to possess with regard to their future employment, viz. that they should be animated with a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and should consequently beseech the master or lord of the harvest to provide labourers for so great a work. "And he said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest. Go: behold I send you as lambs among wolves," that is, unarmed, defenceless, and unprepared to resist the numerous enemies you will have to encounter.

He then gives them various instructions proper for their intended mission, and which are nearly similar to those which he before gave to his Apostles. "Carry," says he, "neither purse" for money, nor "scrip" for superfluous clothing, "nor shoes," besides those on your feet, "and salute no man by the way:" because your mission is not an affair of worldly business, and therefore nothing temporal should stop you from announcing the kingdom of God. "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house; and if a son of peace be there," that is, a person well-disposed, and worthy of peace and benediction, "your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you," to be given to some more worthy person. "And make your abode in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they have: for the labourer is worthy of his hire," and your subsistence is the least thing you can receive from those to whom you announce the Gospel. "Remove not from

house to house," lest you deservedly incur the imputation of a blamable delicacy, and of an impatient temper. "And into whatsoever city you shall enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you," without making any further demands. "And," in return for such hospitality, "heal the sick that are therein, and say to them," by way of consolation: "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," for faith is the foundation of salvation. "But into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof, say: Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you," to show that we will have no communication with you. "Yet know this, that the kingdom of God is at hand," and his truth is announced to you, and therefore you cannot allege the plea of ignorance in extenuation of your guilt. "I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day," when God shall render to every one according to his works, "for Sodom, than for that city. Wo unto thee, Corazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been wrought in you, they had long since done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, exalted even to heaven," by thy pride and ambition, "shalt be plunged even into hell," because it is God himself thou hast rejected, in rejecting those whom he has sent to thee. For "he that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." This is an aggravation of guilt not laid to the charge either of Sodom or Gomorrah. "And the seventy-two disciples," after the term of their mission was expired, "returned with joy" at the happy success of their labours, "saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us," when we speak to them "in thy name. And he said to them: I saw," at the beginning of the world, "Satan, like lightning, falling from heaven," in punishment of his vain complacency

in the gifts with which God had enriched him. Be therefore on your guard: "Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions," whereby are represented the devil and his agents, "and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet" be not vain of this advantage, and "rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven," and in the book of life. "In the same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said: I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them" to the humble and "to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight." These expressions sufficiently pointed out to his disciples that they ought not to attribute to their own merits the new power with which they had been invested. But this justice, by which the proud are left in their blindness, and this mercy, by which the humble are enlightened to salvation, are equally to be ascribed to the Son as well as to the Father. Hence Christ adds: "All things are delivered to me by my Father," the great as well as the little, the wise as well as the unwise: "and no one knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son shall reveal him. And, turning to his disciples, he said," congratulating with them for the happiness which they enjoyed: "Blessed are your eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things you hear, and have not heard them." Then he addressed the following sweet invitation to those who stood round him, and in general to mankind: "Come to me all you that labour" under the miseries of this life, "and are burdened" with the weight of your sins, and of your passions, "and I will refresh you." For this purpose, "take up my yoke upon you," which consists in the love of God and in the love of the cross; "and learn of me, because

I am meek and humble of heart, and" thus only "you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet, and my burden light" to them who love me; and they who fervently practise my law shall find therein a hidden manna superior to all earthly gratifications.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN. LUKE x. 25—37.

IN the two questions which are the subject of this chapter, Jesus first teaches us, that the love of God and our neighbour is a necessary condition for the attaining of eternal life: and, secondly, that our neighbours are all mankind who enjoy one common nature with ourselves. "And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying. What shall I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself (Deut. vi. 5). And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live" eternally. "But he, willing to justify himself," as if he had a sincere desire of being instructed in the precepts of the law, in order to observe them, "said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour?" This was, at that time, a subject of great controversy among the Jews, because that law which merely said: *thou shalt love thy friend as thyself* (Lev. xix. 18), had afforded a plea to the Pharisees for superadding as a necessary consequence: *therefore it is lawful to hate an enemy*. Hence it remained to be determined by Jesus what was the import of the word *neighbour*, and whether it equally comprised relations and others that were not so, strangers equally with our countrymen, our enemies as well as our

friends. "And Jesus answering" the lawyer, related to him a parable, which, from its being so circumstantial both as to places and persons, has greatly the appearance of a real historic fact. In confirmation of this it may be observed, that the road which leads from Jerusalem to Jericho was much infested by robbers, and that there was in particular a certain valley named Adomin, noted for the frequent murders committed there upon passengers. "A certain man," said Jesus, "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," about seven leagues distant, "and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by." Thus these two ministers of the temple carried their inhumanity so far as to turn their back upon a person of their own country, of their own city and religion, even when languishing under the greatest distress. "But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion," and dismounting from his horse, "and going up to him," he immediately began to afford him every assistance in his power: "he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." For, according to the custom of these times, a traveller carried with him such articles of food as these for the convenience of his journey, and this mixture of wine and oil was an application highly proper for the poor man's wounds, in order both to cleanse them from all corruption, or the clotted blood, by the acidity of the wine, and likewise to foment and soften them by the healing sweetness of the oil. "And setting him upon his own beast," in the best manner he was able, "he brought him to an inn, and took care of him," by procuring for him, at his own cost, every proper medical assistance. "And," to leave nothing short, he extended his charity to the providing even for his future wants; for being obliged to pursue his journey, "the next

day," when he departed, "he took out two pieces, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee." After this recital Jesus, addressing the lawyer, asked him: "Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner." That is, learn from the example of this Samaritan, who in the person of a Jew assisted a stranger, a declared enemy of his religion, but in a state of extreme distress, learn, I say, not to limit the quality of neighbour to your own kindred, connections, friends, country, or even religion, but to consider as your neighbour all mankind, of whatever country or religion, when in a state of present or impending want and distress.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

JESUS COMMENDS MARY'S ATTENTION TO HIS DOCTRINE IN PREFERENCE TO MARTHA'S BUSY CARE TO ENTERTAIN HIM. LUKE x. 38—42.

"Now it came to pass as they went" towards Jerusalem, "that he entered into a certain town called Bethania," which was only about two miles from that city, "and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a" younger "sister called Mary." Upon this occasion, Jesus gave a decision of no small importance concerning the respective merit of an active and of a contemplative life, here represented by these two sisters. Whilst Martha was extremely busy in preparing all things necessary for the reception of her distinguished visitor and his holy company, which probably consisted of his twelve Apostles, Jesus, in order to profit of this interval of time, began, as usual, to discourse with them concerning the kingdom

of God. To listen to his heavenly doctrine was the chief delight not only of them but of Mary, "who sitting" therefore "at the Lord's feet, heard his words" with the most religious attention. "But Martha was busy about much serving," and considered it as a hardship to be thus left alone. "Who" therefore "stood, and said," sweetly complaining: "Lord, hast thou no concern that my sister has left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she" rise up and "help me. And the Lord," though well pleased with the affectionate solicitude of Martha, yet acting here the part of a disinterested judge, became the advocate of Mary, and "answering, said to her" sister: "Martha, Martha, thou art solicitous and art troubled about many things," and in preparing many superfluous dishes: one is sufficient; and in reality "but *one* thing is necessary," and that is to love and serve God, and to labour for eternity. "Mary," in keeping herself near to me, in order to nourish her soul with my heavenly doctrine, "hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her;" for pious contemplation is the novitiate of heaven, where it shall for ever continue the sweet and uninterrupted occupation of the blessed.—We must not however infer, that it is lawful to abandon the functions of active life, or neglect the duties of our state, in order to give ourselves up entirely to prayer and contemplation. The most perfect life is that which unites action and contemplation together; and every good Christian, with respect to that state of life in which Providence has placed him, must endeavour to combine both, so that while the necessary duties of his station are not neglected, he may find time to raise up his soul to God, and unite himself to him by prayer and meditation. We must ever reflect that the *salvation of our souls* is the *one thing necessary*, and whatever draws our attention from this necessary business should be either carefully avoided or made subordinate to it. By a pure intention we must sanctify the exterior actions of our calling; we must join the two sisters together; the

activity of Martha and the prayer of Mary should be our alternate exercise. Thus we shall always keep the essential point in view; thus only shall we happily succeed in that one, that important, and that necessary affair for which we were created.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY.

LUKE XI. 1—13.

“AND it came to pass, that as Jesus was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples,” who had refrained through respect from interrupting him, “said to him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” Jesus had already delivered to his hearers a form of prayer, in his sermon upon the mountain, but he here repeats it in behalf of several of his disciples, who probably had not been then present, and, according to the original Greek text, he repeats it nearly in the same terms, and precisely in the same number of petitions: though in the *vulgate* the third petition is wanting.

At the request of the above-mentioned disciple, Jesus pointed out to his followers: 1. The things which in general we must ask of Almighty God. 2. The essential condition of perseverance to render prayer efficacious. 3. The nature of our particular request. “And he said to them: When you pray, say: Father,” who art in heaven: “hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come:” thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: “give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation,” but deliver us from evil.

As already observed, what we may pray for may be classed under two general heads, viz., the glory of God and the necessities of mankind: we begin with the former of these

as justly claiming the first place, and in the first three petitions express our ardent wishes for whatever may promote the glory of the kingdom of God, and the accomplishment of his divine will. In the remaining petitions we pray for our own wants, for the forgiveness of sins, for the avoiding of dangers, and the deliverance from all evils, whether temporal or eternal.

As these petitions, however, have been noticed in detail in a former chapter, it is not necessary to give any further explanation of them here.

After prescribing the form of prayer, and of several things to be asked for in prayer, Jesus proceeds to point out the necessary condition for rendering it efficacious. This is perseverance, the necessity and efficacy of which he shows by a parable or apposite comparison. "And he said to them: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves: because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut," and cannot be opened at so unseasonable an hour, "and my children are" asleep "with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

Our divine Saviour now proceeds to make the application as follows: God is infinitely more liberal and merciful than mankind; "and" therefore "I say to you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh" with humility, "receiveth; and he that seeketh" with fervour, "findeth; and to him that knocketh" with perseverance, "it shall be opened."

As to our particular requests, Jesus points out the nature of them indirectly, by specifying such things as he never

grants to his children, as well as other things which he never refuses to them. What they ask for must neither be useless nor indifferent, as stones, nor dangerous, as serpents, nor fatal to their lives, as scorpions. All these things are instanced as improper subjects of our prayers. The things to be asked for ought, on the contrary, to be either necessary to us, as bread, useful, as fish, or wholesome and serviceable to us, as eggs; all which several articles are granted accordingly “And which of you,” said he, “if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone, or if a fish, will he, instead of a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion. If then you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him.” Hence it appears that this holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is that one thing truly advantageous, wholesome, and necessary, which it behoves all Christians to ask incessantly of Almighty God, because he brings with him all other gifts.

CHAPTER LXXX.

JESUS PRONOUNCES SEVERAL WOES AGAINST THE SCRIBES
AND PHARISEES. MATT. XXIII. 13—35. LUKE XI.
37—54.

“AND” on a certain day, “as he was speaking, a certain Pharisee prayed him that he would dine with him.” Several of the same sect, and also of the Scribes, were in like manner invited. Being desirous of a favourable opportunity of announcing to them several truths which he did not judge proper to be spoken in public, Jesus readily accepted the invitation, “and going in, sat down to eat,” without observing the previous ceremony of washing his hands. “And the Pharisee” marvelled, and “began to say, thinking within himself, why he was not washed before dinner.” Jesus, who

read his thoughts, began a discourse, which he directed both to the Scribes and Pharisees, in which he condemns, in vehement language, their principal vices.

First, he begins by stating their usual practice of washing repeatedly, during their meals, the cups and platters when brought to them, under the apprehension lest these might, by the hands of some unclean attendants, have contracted a legal uncleanness, which would be communicated to them. Thence he takes occasion, in a pleasant manner, to compare them to these very utensils, and reproaches the Pharisees for their scrupulous care in cleansing the outside of their cups and dishes, viz. their body, by frequent washings, and for affecting, in the eyes of the world, a great appearance of sanctity, whilst they were careless as to the inside, that is, the bottom of their heart and conscience, which they left in a most filthy state, and highly unworthy of being presented to God. “And the Lord said, Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and iniquity :” yes, “inwardly you are full of extortion,” excess, “and uncleanness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make also that which is within ? Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside” also “may become clean :” and the more so, because God, who created both, considers the soul as his greatest work, and her acts of religion as the most acceptable part of the worship offered to him. For as the impurity of the body defiles the soul, so also does the purity of the soul communicate itself to the body, to render it truly pure and undefiled. “But of what you have give alms,” in proportion to your substance : “and behold all things are clean to you.” Christ here prescribes the means whereby they may cleanse their souls from the stain of sin, which is, after making restitution of their ill-acquired goods, to give alms according to their abilities. Not that alms are of themselves sufficient to effect this purity in the wicked, such as the Pharisees were ; but

they obtain of God, through the prayers of the poor, that true faith and repentance by which the soul is purified from her guilt.

The second vice which Jesus condemns in the Pharisees, and for which he threatens them with everlasting woe, is their false devotion, which vitiated even their most religious practices. On the one hand, they were foolishly scrupulous in trifles, whilst, on the other, they followed the most relaxed casuistry in matters of the greatest importance. "But woe to you Pharisees," said Christ, "because you tithe mint and rue, and anise, and cummin, and every herb, and have left the weightier things of the law," wherein its very spirit and soul consists. These are "judgment," or that strict justice which each one owes to his neighbour, "and mercy," or that assistance which is due to him, and which is afforded him by good counsel, and by real and effective helps when in our power, "and faith," or honesty in our dealings with him, and fidelity in our promises; "and," lastly, "the charity" or love "of God," for whose sake we must perform all our actions, which likewise comprises faith, or a belief in his words, and a firm hope in his promises. "Now these things," said Jesus, "you ought to have done," as being the very foundation on which all religion is built, and without which it cannot subsist, "and," at the same time, "not to leave undone the other less considerable duties. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel;" for whilst you are scrupulously attached to the most unimportant works of supererogation, you violate, without difficulty, the most essential precepts of God's law.

Thirdly, he reproaches them for their ambition, in vainly contesting for the first rank, and in eagerly grasping at the empty satisfaction of being respectfully addressed in public places. "Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place."

Fourthly, he reproaches them for their avaricious conduct towards widows. "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypo-

crites, because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers; for this you shall receive the greater judgment." It being usual, from the most remote antiquity, to pray in the synagogues for the souls of the deceased, as appears from the second book of Machab. xii., hence widows failed not to recommend their departed husbands to the prayers of the Pharisees, who, on that account, exacted such exorbitant sums, that the circumstances of these poor persons were thereby greatly impaired. Moreover, the long prayers used by them on these occasions, were no other than a specious pretext to satisfy their avarice, by taking advantage of the piety and the weakness of these women, in order to enrich themselves. In this their hypocrisy was notorious, and Jesus declares that their condemnation shall be the more severe, because they have abused so holy a thing as prayer, and have changed a charitable institution into a pecuniary contract.

Fifthly, he rebukes their false zeal and fruitless labours for the propagation of the Jewish religion. "Woe to you," says he, "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you compass sea and land to make one proselyte," that is, to induce a Pagan to become a Jew, "and when he is become one, you make him the child of hell doubly more than yourselves;" because ye are so far from giving the true meaning and design of religion, and leading him to true piety, that ye corrupt, by false notions, his natural notions of good and evil, and persuade him that the greatest crimes are expiated by mere external purifications. This their zeal was in itself laudable, nor is it here blamed: but they are reproached because the conversions wrought by them had no other effect than to render the persons converted more wicked than before, or, as it is more strongly expressed, more deserving of hell-fire than the Pharisees themselves, even in the proportion of two to one.

Sixthly, he taxes them with a consummate ignorance in their casuistical decisions; describing them as guides labour-

ing under an inveterate blindness. The oath most frequently adopted by the Jews, was that of swearing by the temple and by the altar, both of which being consecrated to God by the constant performance of religious rites, the Almighty was thereby called upon, to witness the truth of the thing sworn to, and consequently the violation of such oath was looked upon as so much the more criminal. However, the Pharisees, when consulted as to the criminality of a breach of this nature, failed not to answer, that whosoever swore only by the temple was under no obligation of performing his promise; but that the contrary was the case if he had sworn by the gold of the temple. It is to be observed, that a good part of what was offered on the altar, and given to the treasury of the temple, fell to the share of the Jewish priests, and therefore it not being their interest to have such promises or oaths dispensed with, hence they gave the above ridiculous decision, which Christ here rejects, as replete with folly and blindness. "Woe to you blind guides," said he, "that say, whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing: but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor. Foolish and blind as you are: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold; and whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing," you say: "but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it becomes a debtor. Blind as you are: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it and by all things that are upon it. And whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by him that dwelleth in it. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God and by him that sitteth thereon." This mode of reasoning made use of by Jesus, clearly shows that God is concerned, not only when we mention his sacred and adorable name in express terms, but likewise when we do it implicitly, that is, when we swear by any part of the creation, either because it is the work of his hands, or particularly consecrated to his service.

Lastly, Christ again condemns their hypocrisy, in hiding a criminal soul under the outward show of virtue, by justly comparing them to sepulchral monuments. "Woe to you," says he, "because you are as sepulchres which appear not," and over which men walking perceive them not, as being covered with grass. "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

These reproaches and woes were addressed to the Pharisees: but "one of the lawyers," feeling that some of these were applicable to himself and his brethren, "answering, saith to him: Master, in saying these things thou reproachest us also." He thus brought upon himself, and upon all his brethren, the anathemas pronounced against them in this second part of the discourse. In the first place, Jesus censures their indiscreet severity towards the people, and the unbounded licentiousness in which they indulged themselves; two extremes directly opposite to the character of good pastors of souls. "But he said: Woe to you lawyers also, because you load men with burdens," that is, with a variety of difficult and perplexing precepts, "which they cannot bear; and you yourselves touch not those burdens with one of your fingers." Secondly, Jesus condemns the malicious and sanguinary spirit with which they persecuted all those who announced the truth to them. Of this guilt he convicts them from their own deeds, and foretells, in the following words, the dreadful effects which will ensue. "Woe to you who build up the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just," and who make it appear by your actions that "your fathers killed them. And you say: If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Truly you bear witness that you consent to the deeds of

your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres," not to repair the injury done to them, but to hide the evil disposition of your heart: for you are animated with the same spirit as your fathers. "Fill ye up then the measure of" the crimes of "your fathers," by putting to death him whom the prophets have announced, as this is what you are resolved upon in your hearts. "You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the condemnation of hell," you who so well imitate the malice of your fathers, who are already engulfed in that place of woe? "For this cause the wisdom of God said," speaking of you: "Behold, I send to you prophets, and apostles, and wise men, and Scribes," as I sent to your fathers, "and some of them you will put to death, and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth," and "that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel the just, even to the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, it shall be required of this generation:" yes, "all these things shall come upon this" very "generation," in vengeance of past crimes.

This is an express and clear prophecy of the ensuing siege of Jerusalem, and of the consequent desolation of all Judea, which began thirty-three years after this period, a space of time which does not exceed the duration of one generation. It is not to be imagined that the Jews to whom Christ spoke would be punished for crimes which they themselves did not commit, nor be more severely punished than they deserved: but he speaks of the Jewish people, which, by putting to death their Messiah, should shortly fill up the number of their sins, so that God would destroy their whole nation, as if the blood of Abel and of the prophets came upon them at once. The Zacharias here mentioned is, according to many

of the ancients, the father of St. John the Baptist. Others, with more probability, think it was Zachary, the son of Joiada, who, preaching to the people, was stoned to death in the very place where Christ was speaking (see 2 Chron. xxiv. 20). It is supposed that Joiada had the name also of Barachias; and St. Jerome tells us, that in an ancient copy of St. Matthew, called the Gospel of the Nazarenes, he found this Zacharias called the son of Joiadas. Many of the moderns suppose Jesus Christ here foretells the death of Zacharias, the son of Barach, or Barachias, who was put to death in the temple by the faction of zealots, a little before the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Lastly, Jesus condemns the abuse they made of their authority to the ruin of souls. "Woe to you lawyers," said he, "for you have taken away the key of knowledge," of salvation, and instead of opening, "you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, by your words and example: for you yourselves do not enter in," since you refuse to believe in him who is the way, "and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter," by preventing the well-disposed from believing in me. "And as he was saying these things to them, the Pharisees and lawyers began vehemently to urge him, and to stop his mouth with many questions, lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something from his words, that they might accuse him."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO AVOID HYPOCRISY, AND TO PUBLISH HIS DOCTRINE WITHOUT FEAR. LUKE XII. 1—12.

WHEN Jesus remained in Judea, he was followed by the people in like manner as he had been in Galilee. "And when" on a certain day very "great multitudes stood about

him, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his disciples," and to caution them against the two vices of hypocrisy and timidity; each of which insensibly leads into the other. For it is usual with persons under the load of persecution to dissemble, by pretending a conformity to the opinions and manners of others: whilst, on the contrary, whoever is above this criminal condescension, must expect to draw upon himself the persecution of those who hold different principles. Christ therefore said to his disciples: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;" for this, like a poison, taints all their actions. This advice he grounds upon the vanity and emptiness of such worldly prudence, since, although for a time it may conceal a habit of vice under the cloak of apparent piety, yet this disguise shall one day be torn off. "For there is nothing covered," says he, "that shall not be revealed: nor hidden that shall not be known. For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness, shall be published in the light, and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be preached on the house-tops." This is what will happen particularly at the day of judgment, when the records of our actions, which are shut up during this life, shall be opened, and the most secret recesses of our consciences shall be exposed to the eyes of all mankind. Jesus chose to caution his disciples against hypocrisy, in the hearing of this great multitude, purposely to root out of their minds the high opinion they had conceived of the sanctity of the Pharisees, which was no small hinderance to their believing in him.

He now arms his disciples against a dread of persecution, against all anxiety and solicitude as to their future lot, and against the difficulty they may find in confessing his name before men. He points out to them what they are to despise, and what they are to fear. "And I say to you, my friends," detain not in captivity the truth which I have confided to you, but announce it with intrepidity; "be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no


more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: fear ye him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell" for all eternity. "Yes, I say to you, fear him."

This precept concerning the contempt of death might raise in the minds of his disciples some degree of anxiety as to their future state. For, after all, there is nothing more dear to us than life. To remove all disquietude on this subject, Jesus engages, that whatsoever they shall lose for his sake, shall be faithfully restored to them, and that the very hairs of their head are numbered, to the end that not one of them may be lost to them. He gives a further proof why they should rely with confidence on the providence of God, by instancing the tender care which he has over even the smallest parts of the creation. "Are not five sparrows," says he, "sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" Yes, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered: fear not, therefore," lest God should forget you: "you are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny me before men," in word or deed, "shall be denied before the angels of God." Therefore the confidence of being so gloriously acknowledged by your divine Master, and the apprehension of experiencing so dreadful a confusion on the other hand, ought to strengthen you to undergo death for my sake.

This denying or renouncing of Jesus consists either in speaking erroneously against the Son of man, by considering him as a mere man, and in this case it is a pardonable crime, because such a person may be better instructed and prevailed on to embrace the truth: or it consists in blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, that is, when a person renounces his faith against the conviction of his own conscience, and perseveres to the end in impugning the known truth, in which case his sin will not be forgiven. Therefore, says

Christ, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man," and refuses to acknowledge him as the Son of God, because he sees him acting merely as a man, "it shall be forgiven him," inasmuch as he is deluded by his senses: "but to him that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost," by ascribing the miracles of the Son of man to an evil spirit, "it shall not be forgiven," because this can only be the effect of a voluntary blindness, which leads to final impenitence.

Lastly, Jesus considers the probable embarrassment of his disciples, destitute as they were of learning and ability, when called upon to make a public confession of him, to answer interrogatories, and justify their conduct. He therefore relieves them from all anxiety on this head, by assuring them that the Holy Ghost would not fail to suggest to them whatever might be suitable on those trying occasions. "And when they shall bring you," said he, "into the synagogues, and to magistrates and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you, in the same hour, what you must say," for my honour and glory, and in vindication of your sacred character.



CHAPTER LXXXII.

CHRIST WARNS HIS FOLLOWERS AGAINST SOLICITUDE FOR RICHES, FOOD, AND RAIMENT. LUKE XII. 13—33.

JESUS was yet speaking, "and one of the multitude said to him: Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," as being my undoubted right. He desired Jesus therefore, as the protector of the oppressed, to act the part of a referee, and to make a just partition betwixt them. "But" Jesus, who on all occasions preached the kingdom of God, and recommended a sovereign contempt of all worldly concerns, refused to interfere in this business,

and “he said to him: Man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?” However, by way of compensation for this refusal, he inculcated, in the following discourse, two truths of great importance: first, that worldly riches are frail and perishable; secondly, that we must banish from our minds all solicitude even concerning such things as are necessary to us. “And he said to them,” adverting particularly to him who was the unjust detainer of the other’s property, “take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth,” which is the usual pretext of the avaricious, but, on the contrary, it depends solely on God’s will, by whom our life is either prolonged or shortened as he pleases. “And,” to prove the truth of this, “he spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, because my barns and granaries are too small, and I have no room where to lay up my fruits?” Had he, on this occasion, consulted the dictates of charity, he would not have been at a loss what to do with his immense crop; his barns would have been sufficiently large: but he chose to follow the cravings of avarice. “And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater, and thither I will store up all things that are grown to me and my goods. And I will say to my soul: thou hast, my soul, great plenty of goods, laid up for many years, be at ease, eat, drink,” and “make good cheer. But,” to his cost, this delusive security was soon interrupted, “God said to him,” probably by the dreadful voice of an apoplectic fit, or other mortal disease: “Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee; and the things thou hast provided, whose shall they be? Thus it is with him that heapeth up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God,” that is, who has not laid up a treasure in heaven by charity and good works. From the preceding example Jesus draws a proper argument to prove that it behoves us

to banish from our minds all excessive solicitude even for the necessities of this life. "And he said to his disciples: Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." He, therefore, who has bestowed upon you your life and body will, no doubt, provide food for the maintenance of the one, and clothing for the other. "Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they store houses nor barns, and God feedeth them, how much more valuable are you than they?" He proves the utility of all this solicitude by the following argument. "And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If then you be not able to do so much as the least thing" of this nature by the utmost effort of your care and anxiety, "why are you solicitous for the rest," which is still less within your reach, and concerning which your reliance must be solely upon an all-powerful Providence. He proves how vain and fruitless is all solicitude about our raiment, by instancing the various flowers which deck the face of nature. "Consider the lilies" of the field, "how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin: but I say to you, not even Solomon, in all his glory, was clothed like one of these. Now if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not you then concerned what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, and be not elevated on high on account of your plenty," nor yet distracted with various thoughts and cares how to live. "For all these things do the nations of the world seek after," that is, worldlings who think of this world only, without hoping for another: "but your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things," and you ought not to distrust his all-bountiful Providence. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice," by being assiduous in good works, which render

men just in the eyes of God, "and all these things shall be added unto you" over and above. Lastly, Jesus proves the inutility of solicitude and anxious cares, by the promise which God has made of a gift infinitely more valuable; and this gift is a kingdom of infinite greatness and duration. "Fear not, little flock," saith he, "for it hath pleased the Father to give you a kingdom;" and how unlikely therefore is it that he will refuse you those earthly commodities which are necessary for the support of life. Jesus here styles the elect a small flock, when compared with the great number of the reprobate, and advises the faithful, instead of being anxious for the necessaries of life, to sell even their worldly goods, and to give the price to the poor, in expectation of an eternal kingdom hereafter. "Sell what you possess," says he, "and give alms. Make to yourselves bags, which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not; where no thief approacheth, nor moth consumeth," as it happens frequently to earthly treasures and valuables. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" because as the heart is uniformly attached to what it loves, and there fixes its affections, so if your treasure be in heaven, there also will your hearts be fixed by a love superior to all earthly considerations; and hence, by a constant meditation of eternal things, you shall be disengaged from a multiplicity of anxious cares and vanities, which are inseparable from a love of earthly and perishable goods.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

JESUS EXHORTS HIS FOLLOWERS, AND ESPECIALLY HIS MINISTERS, TO BE ALWAYS READY FOR HIS COMING. MATT. XXIV. 42—51. LUKE XII. 35—53.

To all his followers Christ says: "Let your loins be girt, and your garments tucked up," in order to be ever ready for

immediate action, "and lamps burning in your hands," as it were to receive your master on his return home. This girding of our loins, and having lamps burning in our hands, are figurative expressions which in a spiritual sense convey a very instructive lesson. By the girding of our loins Christ requires a temperance so exact as to bridle all our passions, to mortify our senses, and to restrain them from whatever may be contrary to the law of God. 2dly. By *the lighted lamps* he requires the constant practice of all virtues which may shine forth to the glory of God and the edification of our neighbours. 3dly. He requires, moreover, a *constant watchfulness* in his followers, which implies a proper attention to the respective duties of their calling, lest they give way to remissness, or be surprised by sudden and unlooked-for temptation. "And you yourselves," says Jesus, be ever ready, "like to men who," during night, "wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding" feast: "that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately." Jesus Christ is in heaven; there, in company with the saints, he already celebrates the banquet of his nuptials. His return, with respect to mankind in general, will be at the day of judgment, and he will previously knock at the door of this world by the various scourges and signs which shall precede the last day. But with regard to each individual, this return of Jesus is the moment of our departure out of this life, when we are immediately to be judged. Jesus knocks at our door when he strikes us with a mortal sickness; and we open it to him when we receive with resignation and joy, not only our illness, but death itself, which places us in his presence. Christ next proceeds to state the reward of such as watch in this manner, saying: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing," as a servant before them, "he will minister to them" all things requisite for their spiritual refreshment and

joy. "And if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." All this is a continuation of the same metaphor.

The strict obligation of our being thus constantly watchful is founded upon the uncertainty of the time of our Lord's return. "Watch ye therefore," says Christ, "because you know not at what hour your Lord will come. But this know ye, that if the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open. Wherefore be ye also ready, because at what hour you know not, the Son of man will come." By this we are to understand, that if mankind were certain as to the hour and moment of their death, they would have some plea for passing the rest of their lives in a total forgetfulness of judgment: but as the case is far otherwise, and they are entirely ignorant of the day and hour when the Son of man will come to judge them, it extremely behoves them not to suffer themselves to be lulled to sleep by sinful passions, but to be ever ready to appear before him to give an account of their actions. This is that true Christian watchfulness so often inculcated to us in the Gospel. "And Peter," greatly struck with these words, "said to him: Lord, dost thou speak this parable to us" only, "or likewise to all? And the Lord" intimated that he addressed himself to all, although principally to his ministers, who are the superintendents of the house of God: he therefore said: "Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord setteth over his family, to give them their measure of wheat" and victuals "in due season?" is it not he who is thus watchful? This metaphorical expression of the faithful steward is taken from the manners of those times, when the steward of the house was appointed to distribute monthly to the other servants the quantity of flour apportioned to each individual for his maintenance. In a moral sense, instructions, the

holy sacraments, and the word of God, are the spiritual food and nourishment which a good steward is to distribute to those under his care : he is to be *faithful* in the administration of these spiritual goods, and not to squander them away on the unworthy, by meanly condescending to their impotency : he is to be *wise*, and with a steady *prudence* to find out and embrace such means as are most conducive to the salvation of souls. Such a one, however, is rare ; and this is strongly implied by the question asked by Jesus : *Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise steward ?* In other words, where is he to be found ? He further shows the abundant happiness prepared for a servant of this description, if his master on his return shall find him thus employed in the business assigned to him. “Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods,” in that supreme degree of happiness which is reserved for holy bishops and pastors of souls.

With regard to the bad and unfaithful servant, Jesus shows whence his misconduct arises, viz. from the blind security in which he lives. “But” Christ points out the fatal effects of this security ; for “if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord is long a coming ; and shall begin to strike his fellow-servants, and to eat, and to drink, and be drunk with drunkards,” that is, shall follow his own sensual passions and lusts, “the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he hopeth not, and at an hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him,” that is, depose him from his office, or, according to the Greek, shall cut him asunder by separating his soul from his body, “and appoint his portion with hypocrites” and “with unbelievers : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Christ, however, makes a material distinction between the various degrees of guilt which is incurred by those who shall have sinned through passion or malice, and those who shall have done wrong through ignorance. “And that servant,” says he,

“who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, much shall be required; and they shall demand more of him, to whom they recommend much.” Thus the degree of punishment which is to be inflicted upon wicked and negligent Christians and pastors, will be in proportion to the light and knowledge imparted to them from above, and according to the use they have made of those talents entrusted to them for their own advancement in virtue, as well as that of others. But as the good use to be made of these talents depends upon the degree of charity or of the love of God which inflames our hearts, and which was to be merited for us by the death of Jesus, he here declares that he is come to spread throughout the world his fire of divine charity. “I am come,” says he, “to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized,” viz. the baptism of my blood: “and how am I straitened until it be accomplished” for the salvation of mankind? Be not surprised at this allusion to fire and blood: “Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided; three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law.” This, however unnatural it may at first appear, may easily be explained, if we consider how the Gospel being received by some and rejected by others would produce all these divisions in the Gentile world. Thus, when the faith of Christ was announced to a family consisting of five persons, three of these might embrace it, the other two continuing in their infidelity; and therefore they would be completely divided

amongst themselves. The three who embraced Christianity would view with horror the obstinacy of the two pagans, while the latter would not fail to vent their rage against the former, even perhaps so far as to imbrue their hands in their blood.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

CHRIST SHOWS THE NECESSITY OF DOING PENANCE.—THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE. LUKE XIII. 1—9.

“AND there were present at that very time some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.” It is not easy to guess who these were, nor for what reason Pilate thus slaughtered them. The most probable conjecture is, that they were some of the seditious followers of Judas the Galilean, who denied that God’s people were to pay taxes; and it is thought that some of them, coming to offer sacrifice in the temple, Pilate caused them to be slain at that very time, so that their blood was mixed with their sacrifices. From this tragical event Jesus sought to excite his hearers to repentance. He shows the pressing necessity of it by two examples of sudden and unexpected death; and, secondly, by the bounds which God has fixed to his mercy.

1. That death may unexpectedly surprise us, appears evident from the example of these Galileans, who purposing to offer sacrifice to God in the temple, were themselves immolated as victims; and, secondly, from the example of the eighteen inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were suddenly crushed to death by the fall of a tower near the fish-pond of Siloe, or near the spring of water which, rising at the foot of Mount Sion, feeds that pond. In effect, nothing could be more sudden and unforeseen than these two kinds of death. But as these were very extraordinary events, and not in the usual course of things, mankind might possibly

consider them as a particular chastisement, inflicted solely upon those individuals, in punishment of some very enormous crimes, and by this, their interpretation of the designs of Providence, they might conclude that the punishment of such persons did not apply to them, who were innocent of their crimes. Jesus refuted this objection, "and answering, said to them : Think you that these Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you : unless you do penance, you shall all perish in like manner. Or those eighteen upon whom fell the tower in Siloe and killed them, think you that these also were trespassers above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? No, I say to you : but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." This prophecy was fulfilled at the taking of Jerusalem, and there seemed to be even a coincidence of circumstances in the manner of their punishment, which deserves attention, inasmuch as they perished either by the sword of the Romans, as did these poor Galileans, or they were overwhelmed in the ruins of their city, as those eighteen had been crushed to death by the falling of the tower of Siloe.

2. Jesus proceeded to prove still further the necessity of repentance, by stating that God's patience, in tolerating the greatest sinners, is limited to a certain term, after which it gives place to his justice. To unfold this truth, "he spoke this parable : A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard : Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore ; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering, said to him : Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it. And then if it bear fruit," well and good : "but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Jesus left them to make the application of this parable to themselves, and retired.

In effect, this application is easily made, both with regard

to Jews and Christians. The vineyard of the Lord is the whole house of Israel, consisting of the twelve tribes, or it is his Church gathered out of all nations. The fig-tree is the city of Jerusalem, a city as much raised above the level of other cities as the fig-tree is above the humble vine. The circumstances to be observed in regard to this tree are its long continued barrenness; secondly, the long patience in the owner or proprietor of it; and thirdly, its being finally condemned to the flames.

Wherefore Almighty God sent his Son as the dresser or pruner of this vineyard, to bring into cultivation the Jewish land, and especially the city of Jerusalem, when now behold! this is the third year wherein he has fruitlessly laboured in so ungrateful a soil. Therefore, on finding that no amendment is to be expected, the Almighty issues out his orders to Jesus Christ to root it up. However, the dresser of the vineyard, pleading in behalf of the condemned tree, obtains from the master a respite of another year, in order thus to make a fresh attempt to render it fruitful, by means of trenching and manuring the soil around it. Thus Jesus Christ obtained of his heavenly Father the further trial of a fourth year, after the three first years of his ministry, in order, during this time, to preach the word of God to the city of Jerusalem before its final destruction. This he performed during the three months of this his last year, and his Apostles continued to do the same after his ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

3. But the subsequent words of the dresser to the master of the vineyard, that if this last effort to render it fruitful should prove abortive, he then might cause it to be cut down and condemned to the flames, are a prophecy that the city of Jerusalem, after having ill-treated, expelled, or killed those of the faithful who endeavoured to cultivate it by their preaching and the sanctity of their lives, should be abandoned by Almighty God to a spirit of rebellion, to continual seditions, and finally to the destructive arms of the Roman

people. In fact, these events began to take place very soon after the persecution of the Church, and were completely verified in the seventy-seventh year of the Christian era.

But this parable is applicable to Christians as well as to the Jews. For this barren fig-tree is the lively figure of a mere believing Christian, who, though he be planted in the vineyard of Christ's Church, by baptism and faith, and watered with many graces and favours, as Jerusalem was, yet his faith, being dead and barren, yields no fruit of good works. However, Almighty God, the great master of the vineyard, looks yearly for fruit from him, and if, after long expectation, he finds none, he resolves at length to cut him down as an incumbrance in his Church, which is apt even to infect others that are sound and bear fruit in due season. But upon the earnest supplications of some of his chosen servants, the execution of this dreadful sentence is deferred for some time, in hopes of his bearing fruit. In the meantime, the dresser of the vineyard trenches and manures the soil about it; that is, he uses all necessary care, by the private admonitions or public exhortations of his ministers, to put him in mind of his dangerous situation, and of the necessity of bringing forth the fruits of good works; but if all this care proves abortive, and he still continue barren, nothing remains but that the decreed sentence of divine justice take place, and he be condemned to everlasting flames. Let each one, therefore, apply the parable to himself, and examine how far he is concerned in every part of it; that so, by a speedy amendment of life, and by worthy fruits of repentance, he may prevent the fatal stroke of divine justice, and may thus escape the punishment justly due to his crimes; for there is no alternative for us, but either repentance or damnation.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

CHRIST HEALS THE CROOKED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH-DAY.
LUKE XIII. 10—17.

“AND Jesus was teaching in their synagogue on the Sabbath; and behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bent down, neither could she look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God” for so unexpected a blessing. “And the ruler of the synagogue, being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day,” and likewise jealous of his superior fame, “answering, said to the multitude: Six days there are wherein you ought to work. In them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day,” which by the law is dedicated to rest. Jesus took to himself the rebuke thus addressed by the ruler to the audience, and in answer put him to confusion, by contrasting what had been done in favour of this woman in a single instance, with what was performed by the rulers of the synagogue and the people at large, in behalf of the meanest animals every day of the week, without excepting the Sabbath itself. Wherefore “the Lord answering, said: Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you, on the Sabbath-day, loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead them to water?” and if you do this to ease a beast of pain, “ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day.”

In these few words we may notice four separate arguments in justification of the conduct of Jesus, each of which was a sufficient answer to whatever objections the rulers of the synagogue could allege against him.

1. If we consider who it is that is here relieved, we find

it to be a woman and a faithful daughter of Abraham, both according to the flesh and according to the spirit. With how much more reason may it be deemed lawful to afford relief to one of this description, than to one of the meanest of animals, to relieve which is acknowledged to be an act of humanity.

2. If we turn our eyes to the bodily infirmity which here met with relief, we may argue, that if it be lawful to relieve brute animals in their natural and healthy state, it must be still more allowable to deliver this miserable woman from the oppressive yoke of the devil.

3. If we examine the duration of the infirmity, we may justly infer, that if it be lawful to release a brute animal, which has been under restraint only for a few hours, with how much more reason is it allowable to loose a woman who has been held in captivity by the devil during the space of eighteen years.

4. If we consider the action itself, and the means employed, we must conclude, that if it be lawful to the Jewish people to untie their animals on the Sabbath-day, and to lead them out to water, it must be in a greater degree allowable to Jesus to address himself to a human creature in misery, and to lay his hands upon her head ; both of which are less servile actions than those which the Jews constantly practised without scruple. “ And when he said these things, all his enemies were ashamed, and all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by him.”

This crooked woman may be considered as a lively figure of a soul bent and bowed down to earthly things, and held captive by the devil in the chains of sin. Immersed in carnal pursuits, all her affections are earthly ; she will not, and cannot, look upwards to behold heavenly things, to think on her Creator, to consider his terrible judgments, and prepare for eternity. However, Christ, as in the present instance, sometimes beholds a soul in this miserable condition with an eye of compassion ; he prevents her with his graces ; and by

internal inspirations, or the external word of his ministers, calls her to him, in order to be converted and cured, by true repentance, of her spiritual infirmity. For this purpose he lays his hand on her, that is, he imparts to her spiritual help; and she is quickly raised up and enabled to see, love, and contemplate eternal things; and being thus made sensible of her past dangerous and sinful state, she blesses her God with a grateful heart, and serves him ever after with so much the greater fervour and love, by how much his mercy and goodness have been more conspicuous in her regard.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE DEDICATION OF THE ALTAR OF HOLOCAUSTS. JOHN X.
22—42. MATT. XIX. 1, 2. MARK X. 1.

“Now it was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem.” This festival was appointed by Judas Machabæus, in commemoration of his having re-established the altar of Holocausts, which had been profaned with the most abominable sacrifices by Antiochus, surnamed the *Illustrious*. The day fixed for this festival was the 25th of the month Casleu, which corresponds with our month of November or December. This solemnity Jesus chose to honour with his presence, “and” as it was winter, and the weather cold, “Jesus,” for the sake of warmth, “walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. The Jews therefore came round about him,” and endeavoured, by their importunity, to extort an explicit avowal of his being the Messiah. Since a declaration of this sort was considered by them as tantamount to his proclaiming himself king of the Jews, they eagerly wished for so plausible a pretext for seizing upon him and delivering him up as guilty of high treason. In order to draw him into this snare, they feigned a wish that he might be their long expected Messiah, pretending that they were ready to ac-

knowledge him under that quality, if he would but authorise them so to do, by his own explicit declaration. Therefore they earnestly entreated him to remove all uncertainty on this subject, “and said to him: How long dost thou keep our minds in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.”

Jesus saw into the bottom of their hearts, and refused to make the open declaration requested of him. He however justified himself from the blasphemy which they falsely imputed to him, and afterwards withdrew himself from their fury, by repairing to the opposite side of the river Jordan. “Wherefore,” to the question whether or not he were the Messiah, “Jesus answered them: I speak to you,” and have already told you, “and you believe not; the works that I do, in the name of the Father, they give testimony of me,” and proclaim to the world my real character and quality. “But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep,” refusing to believe in me and to follow my doctrine, by your own wilful blindness. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them” from all eternity, by a particular love and affection, “and they follow me: as their shepherd, obeying my precepts, and imitating those bright examples of virtue which I set before them. “And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand.” Their salvation is certain, not in such a manner as to be known to them, since they live only in a firm hope of it, which is ever accompanied with a salutary fear; but this certainty is owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace, which renders them victorious over all their enemies, over the devil and his wicked suggestions, over the world, its frowns and its smiles, and over their own frail nature, ever liable to sin and corruption. He proceeds to prove this in favour of his elect, by the following argument: “That which my Father hath given me,” by begetting me from all eternity, as his only consubstantial Son, “is greater than all” created things: “and” as “no man can

snatch them out of the hand of my Father," so neither can any one snatch them out of mine ; for "I and the Father are one" thing, not by an union of affection only, but one in nature, substance, power, and all other absolute perfections. "The Jews then," rightly understanding that Jesus attributed to himself the almighty power of God, by having the same nature with him, "took up stones that they might stone him," as guilty of blasphemy. However, that same divine power which was the object of their rage, hindered them from putting their evil designs into execution. "Jesus answered them: Many good works I have showed you from my Father," in a continued series of favours and blessings, "for which of these works do you stone me? The Jews answered him: It is not for any good work we are for stoning thee, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being man, makest thyself God." This their calumnious imputation of blasphemy was the more atrocious, as originating, first, from the infinite mercy of the Father, who, instead of sending a common man to redeem mankind, had deputed his only-begotten Son upon earth ; and, secondly, from the infinite humiliation of the Son, who, laying aside all his glory, had hidden his divine nature under the obscure veil of our human flesh. These were incomprehensible mysteries, it is true, but then the miracles wrought by Jesus sufficiently attested their credibility, and ought to have carried conviction to their minds. "Jesus answered them," by quoting the sixth verse of the eighty-first Psalm, "Is it not written in your law: *I said, you are gods?*" God himself here speaks to judges and magistrates, whom he thus establishes as gods over their equals, by the share which he imparts to them of his power and justice. Now "if he called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken," though mere sinful men, "and the Scripture cannot be made void," nor assert an untruth, "do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified" (by communicating to him all his holiness, "and" whom he hath "sent into the world" as the source

and model of the sanctity of all men): "Thou blasphemest because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me," and my word, which is truth itself, "believe" at least "the works," these wonderful works which I perform in your presence: "that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father," so that we have one and the same nature, one and the same will, one and the same power. "They sought therefore" once more "to take him, and he escaped out of their hands," either by making himself invisible, or preventing, by his divine power, the execution of their designs. "And he went away again," till their rage should subside, "into the confines of Judea, beyond the Jordan, into that place where John was baptizing first," viz. Bethabara; "and there he abode. And great multitudes flock to him again, and he taught them as he was accustomed to do, and he healed them there, and they said: John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John said of this man were true," as appears by the miracles which he has wrought before our eyes. We ought therefore to receive the testimony which John gave of him, as to his being the Son of God and the Messiah. This reasoning made an impression on their minds, "and many believed in him."

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE INDISSOLUBLE BOND OF MARRIAGE—THE EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY. MATT. XIX. 3—12. MARK X. 2—12. LUKE XVI. 18. CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN. MATT. XIX. 13—15. MARK X. 13—16. LUKE XVIII. 15—17.

THE lawfulness or unlawfulness of divorces was a subject of great debate in those times. Some, who were of the school

of Hillel, contended that a divorce was lawful if a wife were no longer agreeable to her husband; founding their opinion on those words of the law, *if she hath not found favour in his eyes*. On the contrary, others, of the school of Shammai, required a just and lawful cause for a divorce, which could be no other than the crime of adultery.

The Pharisees were desirous of obtaining the sentiments of Jesus upon this important question, hoping perhaps they should be able from his answer to render him unpopular either with the male sex, if he confined within just bounds the unrestrained liberty which they assumed of repudiating their wives, or with the women, if he sanctioned by any mark of his approbation this odious practice of the men. "And there came to him the Pharisees, tempting him, and saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause" whatever, frivolous or substantial, just or unjust? "But he answering," condemned these divorces; first, in themselves; secondly, in their consequences, or the new engagements to which they give occasion; thirdly, indirectly, by giving his blessing to children who were the fruits of a lawful union. Jesus therefore at first, as it were to rid himself of so unpleasant a question, referred the Pharisees to the law of Moses for a decision of the case proposed: but in reality it was to have an opportunity of explaining to them a law which they widely perverted from the original intention of the law-giver. He therefore "saith to them: What did Moses command you? Who said: Moses gave permission, to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away," without any kind of restriction, or assigning any cause. "To whom Jesus answered, and said," reprobating this their vague unrestrained liberty: "Have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning made them a *male* and a *female*?" He created not a multiplicity of women for one man, either to join them to him in marriage at the same time, or to allow him to change them successively according to his fancy, whilst, on the contrary, in the brute creation, he created several

females for one male, with a view to the more speedy multiplication of their species. The state of marriage, therefore, should be regulated with a reference to this first model, consequently admits not amongst the faithful a plurality of wives, either at one and the same time, or successively, by divorcing one after another.

The second reason is taken from the marked preference which a man is bound to give to his wife in all occurrences of life, a preference above every other person or thing in the world. Of all our connections, one of the nearest must be that of a child with his parents, to whom, under God, he owes his birth and education, and whom he is bound to assist in his turn, when labouring under poverty and want. Yet, ever since the first woman was taken from the side of man, the latter no sooner contracts a matrimonial alliance, than he must, in preference to his parents, inseparably attach himself to the company of his wife: "and" therefore "Christ said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh (Genesis ii. 24). Therefore now they are not two, but *one flesh*," and to be esteemed as one person. This unity is further proved by considering the union of sentiment caused by conjugal love, and the union of that individual society which they contract for life. Upon the strength of these accumulated reasons, Jesus concludes: "What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." The Pharisees, who approved not this decision, but who yet had no reply to offer in opposition to the fixed laws of nature, endeavoured now to shelter themselves under the authority of Moses. "They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce and to put away?" The objection here alleged is captious in the extreme, since Moses had merely permitted or tolerated divorces, requiring as a necessary condition the act of repudiation to be delivered in writing to the divorced party. But the Pharisees laid the stress of the commandment upon the divorce itself equally

as upon the condition required, viz. the deed or writing attending such divorce. Jesus, in plain terms, discriminates that which they thus confounded together. "He said to them: Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives," but by no means commanded you; and this he did to obviate greater evils, it being evidently much better that husbands should separate from their wives than destroy them by poison, or any other way. "But from the beginning it was not so," since God allowed not Adam, or any of the ancient patriarchs, to dismiss their wives; insinuating hereby, that from this time forwards he would reduce the laws of marriage to their primitive state. Jesus adds, that the repudiating of a wife, and the marrying of another, are here to be considered as two very distinct things. "And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." As for the divorce, he declares this to be allowable only when a wife has committed adultery, because in this case she herself has first commenced the separation by her infidelity to her husband, which he only completes by proceeding to the allowed divorce. But as to a fresh marriage in consequence thereof, he declares, that whosoever marries a woman, after having repudiated his former wife, or marries a woman repudiated by her husband, is guilty of adultery, because a divorce by no means breaks asunder the bond of marriage, but merely puts an end or termination to the society of the married couple. This is an explicit answer to the question proposed by the Pharisees. For as the desire of a second marriage was the real motive which caused these divorces to be so frequent among the Jews, Jesus makes it appear very clearly, that if it be not allowable to marry a second wife, the first being yet alive, even when the reason of a divorce is strictly just and lawful, it must be still more unlawful to contract a second marriage when the divorce originates from frivolous

and insufficient motives, and when it is consequently unjust in the extreme. "And in the house again his disciples," greatly surprised at this decision, "asked him concerning the same thing. And he saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Here is a definite sentence passed against all marriages subsequent to and founded upon a divorce; and whatever difficulty there may be in St. Matthew, it is here done away by the parallel texts of St. Mark and St. Luke. "His disciples" hearing this, "say unto him: If the case of a man with his wife be so," that the bond between them be indissoluble, "it is not expedient to marry," intimating that the effect of such a prohibition might be no small hinderance to the propagation of the human race. "Who said to them," that this effect was not to be apprehended, because "All men take not this word," that is, relish not the happiness of perpetual continency, "but they to whom it is given" from above: "For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made so by man; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs," by renouncing all carnal pleasures, "for" the obtaining of "the kingdom of heaven. He that can take it, let him take it;" that is, let those persons embrace a state of perfect continency who have strength to keep it. By which words he plainly indicates that a state of perpetual continency, previous to a voluntary engagement thereto, is entirely optional, and by no means obligatory; and likewise, that they who embrace it either because of some vow which they have made, or from a principle of aiming at greater perfection, undertake a work highly commendable and meritorious.

"Then were little children presented to him, also infants, that he might touch them," and "lay his hands upon them and pray" for their spiritual good. This was a proof of the

faith of the people, who concluded that the same hands which could restore instantaneous health to the sick, must necessarily impart every good to such children as they should touch. "Which, when the disciples saw, they rebuked those that brought them," as if making too free with their divine Master, and requesting of him what, in their ideas, was beneath his dignity. "Whom when Jesus saw," he blamed their conduct; and to show to the world that his assertions in praise of virginity were not meant by him as derogatory from the holiness of the marriage state, he chose, by giving his blessing to these little ones, to bestow a signal mark of his approbation of that state of life which had given them birth. Wherefore, "calling them together, he was much displeased, and saith to them : Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God," of such as imitate their humility, their simplicity of mind and heart, and innocency of their manners. "Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, shall not enter into it." By which words he gives us to understand, that a confidence in our own strength, in our own free will, and in our own merits, is an invincible obstacle to salvation, there being an infinite disproportion between the smallness of our merits, and the greatness of eternal glory. "And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them. And when he had" thus "imposed hands upon them, he departed from thence."

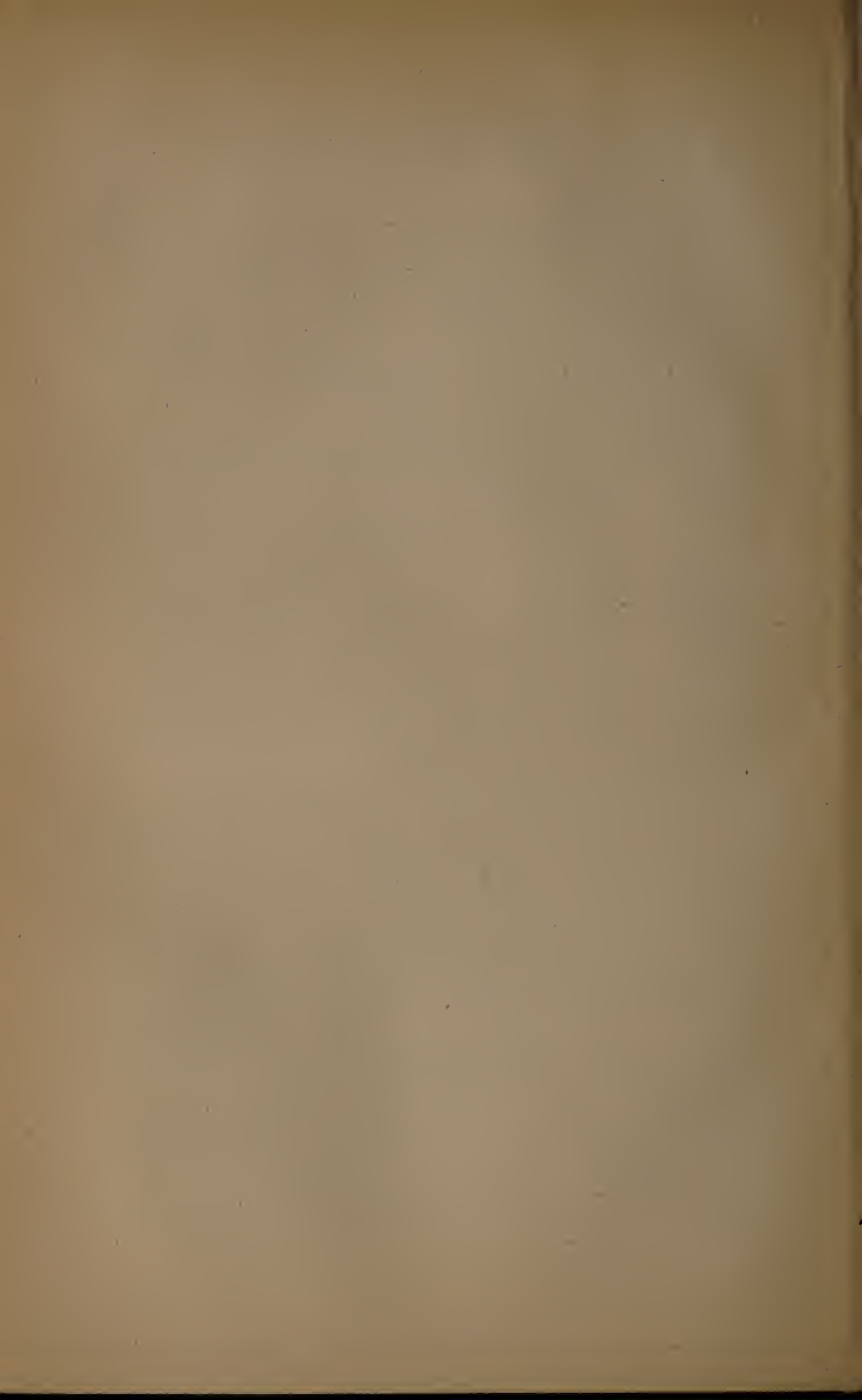
CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

JESUS SHOWS THE DANGER OF RICHES, AND PROMISES GREAT REWARDS TO THOSE WHO FORSAKE ALL TO FOLLOW HIM.
MATT. XIX. 16—30. MARK X. 17—31. LUKE XVIII.
18—30.

"Now when he was gone out into the road, a certain man," who was a ruler, "running up and kneeling before him,



JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.



asked him, and said : Good Master, what shall I do, that I may receive everlasting life ? ” He here appears to have considered Jesus in no other light than as a holy and respectable personage. “ And Jesus,” in order to rectify his misconception, “ said to him : Why callest thou me good ? Why dost thou talk of good ? None is ” essentially “ good but one, that is God.” By this reply the young man was given to understand, that if he were sincere he ought to consider him also as God, and not to separate in him goodness from the Divinity, they being in his regard inseparable.

Jesus then particularises two sorts of good works which this young man should perform for obtaining the object he had in view. The first are works of obligation or precept ; the second are works of counsel only, with the view of attaining to greater perfection. “ And,” with regard to the former, Jesus said : “ If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.” The youth, having nothing to reproach himself with on this head, “ said to him, Which ? ” expecting doubtless to receive some new precepts from one whom he viewed as a new teacher among the Jews. “ And Jesus said : Thou knowest the commandments : thou shalt not kill : thou shalt not commit adultery : thou shalt not steal : thou shalt not bear false witness : do no fraud : honour thy father and thy mother : and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man,” with a degree of confidence, “ saith to him : Master, all these things I have observed from my youth ; what is yet wanting to me ? Which when Jesus heard, looking on him ” with an eye of complacency, “ he loved him ” with a more tender affection, “ and said to him : Yet one thing is wanting to thee ; if thou wilt be perfect, go sell all things whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.” In calling for this entire sacrifice of his worldly goods, Jesus brought this his virtue to a severe trial, not indeed as if it were absolutely necessary to enable him to keep the commandments, but only as the means of keeping them with

greater facility and perfection. I say with greater facility and perfection, for this renunciation of earthly goods removes the chief obstacles of divine charity, which are anxious cares and solitudes for this world; it cuts off the abuse of riches, and even the power of abusing them; and consequently it extirpates the very root, as it were, of all sin, which is an inordinate attachment to the things of this world. "And when the young man had heard this word, being struck sad at the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus seeing him become sorrowful, looking about, he said to his disciples: How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Amen I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus again answering, saith to them: Again I say to you, children, how hard is it for them who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had heard this, the disciples wondered the more, saying among themselves: Who then can be saved?" For all men either possess riches or desire to possess them.

The dangers which attend on riches and affluence arise from the several evils and temptations which are occasioned by them. 1. Riches impose on the possessor the greatest duties of charity towards the indigent. 2. They are no small impediment to his discharging those duties, by naturally inspiring him with an eagerness both to keep what he has, and to add thereto by care and parsimony. 3. They not only inflame the passions, but also supply the means of indulging them. 4. They insensibly fill him with pride, self-love, a confidence in his own strength, a forgetfulness of God, together with a contempt for his equals, and a spirit of insolence even to those who are above him. Finally, experience evinces that many, when under the necessity of losing either their worldly goods or their souls, blindly sacrifice

their conscience and eternal happiness to this base passion for perishable riches.

These and such like considerations, arising from the words of Christ, weighed so powerfully with the Apostles, that they considered the salvation of rich worldlings as next to impossible: "and Jesus looking on them" with a more indulgent eye, "saith to them: With men this is impossible, but not with God; for all things that are impossible with men, are possible with God." He who is the master of man's heart can easily disengage it from its greatest attachments. Wherefore this implies not that God can or will save the rich whilst they continue enslaved to their riches, and to all those habits of vice which are frequently the concomitants of affluence; but that God, by his all-powerful grace, can withdraw the rich from the abuse and corruption which usually follow affluence, by infusing into their minds the virtues of charity and humility, and all those other virtues in which they are so generally deficient. "Then Peter answering" for himself and his brethren, "said to him: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee, what therefore shall we have," seeing we have thus observed the counsel thou hast given to this young man? "And Jesus said to them: Amen I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" that is, all Christian nations who compose the true Israel of God, and who are prefigured or represented by the twelve tribes of the Jewish people. What is here said has no reference to the judging of infidels, because having never embraced the Christian faith, or having afterwards relinquished it, they are already judged.

The reward here held out to the Apostles is to be considered as peculiar to themselves at the day of judgment: but with regard to that other recompense which they are to receive even in this life, this is not limited solely to them,

but promised to all those who shall imitate their example. "And there is no man," says Christ, "who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come, life everlasting." This promise was literally accomplished, when the faithful that were in affluence sold all their possessions and brought the amount to the Apostles, to be employed by them for the common maintenance of the indigent members in the infant Church. And it is moreover accomplished in the present times, when, with the view of seeking greater perfections, Christians abandon their goods and houses, then parents and friends, and enter into a religious order, where the number of their friends and goods are, properly speaking, multiplied an hundred-fold.

Jesus declares that, besides the preceding promise, they shall receive in the next world everlasting life: "But," he adds, that "many that are first" here, "shall be last, and the last first." As if he had said to the Apostles: Perhaps you may have some difficulty to persuade yourselves that a small number of poor fishermen, such as you are, will ever be placed as judges over all the great ones, the wise men, and the kings of the earth. But I here assure you, that many who take pride in this life from their high qualities and superior rank, shall be reckoned as nothing in the next life, since they shall be excluded from eternal happiness: whilst they, who now in the eyes of worldlings are even humbled to the dust and dirt of the earth, shall then be exalted and raised infinitely above the heads of their proud oppressors in this world.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE LABOURERS OF THE VINEYARD. MATT. XX. 1—16.

THE immediate design of the following parable was to show that the Gentiles, though called later than the Jews, would be equally made partakers with them of God's promises. In a manner no less clear and natural, it expresses the goodness of God in calling mankind to his service, in every age since the beginning of the world, and in every part of the life of man; pointing out, at the same time, the different conduct of the Almighty respecting the choice which he makes of his elect. "The kingdom of heaven," that is, the Church of Christ, "is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard; and having agreed with the labourers for a penny (*i. e.* about sevenpence halfpenny in our money) a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour," that is, between eight and nine, "he saw others standing in the market place idle: and he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just, and they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth" hour, which lasted from eleven o'clock till mid-day, "and" likewise about "the ninth hour," which is from two to three o'clock in the evening, and "he did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour," which answers to the hour between four and five, "he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us: he saith to them: Go ye also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last, and so on to the first. When therefore they came who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: but they

received also a penny a piece. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering, said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny" a day? "Take what is thine and go thy way: it is my will to give to this last even as to thee. Is it not lawful for me to do as I will" with my money, and this without exciting thy jealousy? "Is thy eye evil because I am" thus "good" and generous? "So," at the day of judgment, "shall the last" in this world "be the first, and" those that have been "the first" here on earth, shall be "last in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, they shall be for ever excluded from it: this, it is to be feared, will be the misfortune of far the greater number: "for many are called" by faith, "but few are chosen" and admitted into glory, because they do not persevere in the grace and love of God.

The foregoing is the shell of the parable, which is easily explained, if we set aside the various times or hours in which the father of the family went out to hire labourers.

The father, or master of the family, is God himself, the public place is the world, where, previous to a call from God, each one is idle and doing nothing to the purpose. The vineyard is the Church of God, in which each vine is every faithful soul; the labourers are mankind in general. The hiring of the labourers is the calling of mankind into the Church by faith, which is a gift of God. The various hours of hiring are the different periods in which men are so called. The work performed in the vineyard consists in the endeavours used by the Apostles, and their successors, to plant the faith in the souls of the faithful; it refers likewise to the care which each one takes in the cultivation of his own soul by the diligent practice of virtue; the penny, bestowed as the price of labour, represents eternal life, or the kingdom of heaven: the steward, or overseer of the

labourers, is Jesus Christ himself: the evening, when the labourers are paid for their work, is the end of the world, for at the general resurrection each one shall be rewarded according to his works.

CHAPTER XC.

CHRIST HEALS THE DROPSY, AND RECOMMENDS HUMILITY AND HOSPITALITY TO THE POOR—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER. LUKE XIV. 1—24.

“AND it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day, to eat bread, that they watched him.” On this occasion we behold Jesus working a miracle in the cure of a man sick of a dropsy. 2. Giving sublime instructions to all the company, as well as to the master of the house. 3. Addressing to them a parable descriptive of the glory of heaven. “And behold there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace;” not being willing either to give a sanction to that which they had hitherto uniformly condemned, or to pass an absolute sentence of condemnation against what they well knew him capable of justifying by invincible arguments. “But he taking him” by the hand, thus to remove all doubt of the author of his cure, “healed him, and sent him away” perfectly sound. “And answering them, he said,” in justification of the miracle: “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day, though with much toil and labour?” He hence left them to infer, that if it were allowable to save the life of an animal on that day, though with considerable trouble, how much more so to restore health to a sick man on the present occasion, especially since a word, or a mere touch of the hand, was sufficient to effect his cure. “And they could not answer

him to these things." And each one being now seated at table, Jesus took an opportunity to give them two important instructions, one of which recommended to the guests there present the virtue of humility, the other the virtue of charity, which last was more particularly addressed to the master of the house by whom he had been invited.

"And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him, and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee: Give this man place, and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place;" for it is not to be expected that the others, who are already seated, should relinquish for thee their several stations at the table. "But when thou art invited, go sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee, friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Our blessed Lord, sensible how deficient the Pharisees were in interior humility, advises them to practice at least that which is exterior, and which consists in offices of civility and condescension to our neighbour. To persuade them, he urges as an argument that this conduct is the very means of preserving that credit and reputation of which they were so ambitious, since it ever reflects a greater discredit to be displaced from an honourable station, than it brings honour to us in the eyes of the world to have attained to it. Moreover, this apparent modesty and backward conduct, which induces us to sit down in the lowest place, may justly be considered as a leading step to bring us forward to a true and genuine humility.

Having thus recommended the practice of humility, Jesus now gives a lesson of prudence to his guest-master, by advising him to employ his riches in favour of the poor, and

with a view to his own eternal happiness. “And he said to him also that had invited him: When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich: lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense: for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just. When one of them that sat at table with him had heard these things, he said to him: Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. But” Jesus answered him by the following parable, which tended to show that the greater part of the Pharisees and of the higher classes among the Jews would, by their own fault, be excluded from that heavenly banquet. And “he said to him: A certain rich man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.”

The plain import of this parable was, that the chiefs and

main body of the Jews would be rejected for their obstinacy, while the most despicable part of them in the streets and lanes, together with the still more despised Gentiles in the highways and hedges, would be called in by faith to partake of the eternal banquet of heaven. Accordingly, the poorer sort of Jews, whom, according to the prophets, Jesus was sent to instruct, were almost the only followers whom he had whilst here upon earth; and after his resurrection he sent his Apostles and their successors to the despised Gentiles, in order to compel them, by the invincible force of miracles, of prayers, of threats, and of martyrdom, to abandon the false religion of their forefathers, and thus gain possession of those places in heaven of which the Jews, by their obduracy, had rendered themselves unworthy.

This parable, however, is no less applicable to Christians than to the Jews. The eternal happiness of heaven is here compared to a great *supper*, because each individual will partake of it only at the close of life, and the aggregate number of the elect only at the end of the world, when this supper is to be followed by everlasting rest and quiet. This happiness of heaven is designed by Almighty God for all mankind, and therefore he sends his servants, the ministers of his word, to invite us all to this celestial banquet, in the most pressing manner, because all things are ready and waiting our attendance. But the bulk of mankind pay little attention to so kind an invitation: they all, says the parable, began to excuse themselves. One said, that he had bought a farm and must needs go to see it; another that he had bought some oxen and was going to try them; the third made answer, that he had married a wife and could not come. This is a lively representation of all those worldly-minded Christians, who are so taken up with the affairs and pleasures of this life as to neglect the happiness of heaven and the eternal salvation of their souls.—But we may observe, that these several pretences which keep numberless Christians from the service of God, will be of no

avail hereafter with Christ, and therefore he declares that none of them shall taste his supper. His mercy, thus abused, will give way to justice; he will call in others to fill up the number of his guests; and he will make them eternally happy with him in heaven, whilst on the former he will exercise the rigour of his just judgments for all eternity.

CHAPTER XCI.

CHRIST TEACHES THAT ALL THINGS ARE TO BE RENOUNCED
FOR HIS SAKE. LUKE XIV. 25—35.

“AND” on a certain day “there went great multitudes with him,” and being well aware that the generality of them were enslaved to their evil inclinations and passions, without any design of changing their lives, he addressed himself to them. “Turning he said to them: If any man come to me, and hate not (*i. e.* love not less: Gen. xxix. 31; Rom. ix. 13), his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and moreover his own life,” so as to be disposed to lose all these things, rather than offend me, “he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after me,” by an imitation of my patience in labours and sufferings, “cannot be my disciple.” Christ hints that we are not inconsiderately to enrol ourselves in his service, but previously to view the difficulties which we shall have to encounter, and the obligations which he requires of his followers. This is what prudence alone would dictate in regard to all other undertakings. “For which of you,” says Christ, “having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary whether he hath enough to finish it: lest after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to perfect it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”

In this comparison is contained the following argumentation. To carry our cross, so as to attain to the summit of Christian perfection, is an undertaking of much greater difficulty than to build a tower from the foundation. Now no one is so inconsiderate as to undertake the latter without duly calculating whether he hath wherewith to complete it. It therefore behoves every one who is engaged to carry his cross in the footsteps of Jesus Christ to consider well his strength, and to examine whether he be able to bear its weight to the end, under whatever form it may be laid upon him; lest, after having undertaken it, he may find it too troublesome, and on that account throw it down, and desert the cause of his Master; thus making himself the laughing-stock of all the devils and condemned infidels in hell, who will reproach him with having laid the foundation of salvation without being able to complete the edifice. To this raillery must all bad Christians be exposed for eternity.

Christ now proceeds to a second comparison illustrative of the same subject, as follows. "Or what king going to engage in a war against another king, doth not first sit down and think whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that with twenty thousand cometh against him. Or else, whilst the other is yet afar off, sending an embassy, he desireth conditions of peace." From this comparison results the following argument. By embracing the Christian religion, we declare war against all the powers of hell, against the world, and against ourselves; we become liable to be opposed by our nearest connections, by our parents, wife, children, brethren, sisters, relations, and friends: a species of warfare much longer and more irreconcilable than a war between two neighbouring sovereigns of unequal forces. Now of these two sovereigns, he that is the least powerful would certainly be careful to avoid risking a battle in which he foresaw that his small army must infallibly be overthrown. It therefore behoves us in like manner, either not to enrol ourselves in the army of Jesus Christ, or, after being enlisted

in his service, courageously to renounce our nearest and dearest relatives and connections, when they prove hostile to our spiritual interest, and seek to withdraw us from our duty. "So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth," and is not disposed to abandon all for the love of me, "cannot be my disciple." As a further elucidation of the real character of true and false disciples, Jesus compares them with salt. 1. In its state of perfection; and 2. In its corrupted state. In like manner as "salt is good," whilst it retains its strength and virtue, so nothing is greater and more estimable than the character of a Christian, who performs whatever his religion enjoins. He is as salt with respect to the rest of mankind, whom, by the force of his example, he preserves from being tainted by vicious habits. "But if the salt shall lose its virtue, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" It becomes absolutely useless. "It is neither profitable for the land nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out" of doors to be trodden under foot by passengers. Thus it will be with the disciples of Jesus, when they give way to the corruption of sin by abandoning the rules of a Christian life. They are thenceforwards useless both to their neighbours and to themselves, and have nothing to expect but to be expelled from the society of the good, and consigned to the flames of hell. This forewarning being a subject of the greatest importance, Jesus exhorts them to reflect on it duly: "he that hath ears to hear," says he, "let him hear," and carefully lay this up in his heart.

CHAPTER XCII.

VARIOUS PARABLES RESPECTING THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS,
VIZ. THE LOST SHEEP, THE DRACHMA, AND THE PRODIGAL
CHILD. LUKE XV.

"Now the publicans," a class of people odious and infamous amongst the Jews, and likewise sinners in general, were the

foremost to follow Jesus, and they “drew near unto him to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Hence they inferred that Jesus must be equally unclean and profane with those whom he thus appeared to countenance. He justified his conduct by three parables, which all tended to show the great joy caused in heaven by the conversion of sinners. The first represents them under the figure of a strayed sheep, the second under that of a piece of money which is lost, the third under that of a debauched young man.

First, in regard to the lost sheep, Christ “spoke to them a parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it: and when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost?” In this parable the strayed sheep represents each individual who by sin is lost and separated from God: the ninety-nine sheep are the just who have remained steady in the paths of virtue; the shepherd is Jesus Christ. He here leaves it to the Pharisees to make the application, which is easily done: for if it be commendable in the shepherd to go in quest of a lost sheep, and to bring it again to the fold on his shoulders, with every demonstration of joy, how could the Pharisees, with any colour of equity, condemn the conduct of Jesus in associating with persons of a wicked life, with no other view than to bring them back from their strayed paths, since each of their souls was infinitely more precious in the sight of God, than whole flocks of sheep in regard of the shepherd? Jesus further declares the joy occasioned in heaven by the repentance of such sinners. “I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not

penance." Whosoever therefore, after the example of Jesus, uses his endeavours to bring about the conversion of sinners, so far from contracting any share of their impurity or profaneness, performs, on the contrary, a work most pleasing in the eyes of God and of his holy angels. However, the joy here spoken of in consequence of the conversion of a sinner, does not imply that God prefers one converted sinner to many holy persons, who have continued steadfast to their duty; but only that the conversion of a sinner affords to the angels of heaven a new and peculiar subject of joy, such as they do not experience from the perseverance of the just.

The second parable is drawn from the comparison of a *lost piece of money*. "For what woman having *ten pieces of money*, if she lose one piece, doth she not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the *piece* I had lost." We are here to reflect how deficient the comparison is between a small piece of money and the infinite worth of a great number of souls, which are stamped with the image of God, and yet totally lost by sin. If therefore no blame attach to this woman for her assiduity in searching after what was lost, how much less ought Jesus to be censured for employing in the search of lost souls his cares, his labours, his humiliations, his fatigues, and for testifying his extreme joy when his endeavours are crowned with success. This he leaves to the reflections of the Pharisees, and concludes with these words: "So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

The third parable, which places before our eyes a young man of debauched life, displays in the most amiable light the infinite goodness and gentleness of God, in pardoning and receiving the most abandoned sinners into favour upon their sincere repentance. "And" Jesus "said: A certain

man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me that portion of the estate which falleth to me. And he divided the estate between them. And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and put himself under a citizen of that country: and he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine ate: and nobody gave him *any thing else*. And entering into himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound in bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up, he came to his father: and when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father," without upbraiding him, "said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing: and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe. And he was angry, and would not go in. His father therefore going out began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: Behold, for so many

years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends : but as soon as this thy son is come, who has spent his fortune with harlots, thou hast killed the fatted calf. And he said to him : Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine by right of birth. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again ; he was lost, and is found." All these figures are verified in the conversion of a penitent sinner. The Almighty, as a tender father, first excites in him a desire of repentance ; he sees him whilst yet a *great way off* in his naked and forlorn condition, and is touched with pity and compassion for him ; he runs out to meet him ; he lovingly receives him into his embraces ; he clothes him again as his son with the sacred robe of justifying grace ; he puts a ring of great value on his finger, as it were a pledge of the Holy Ghost dwelling within him, as in his temple, and as an assurance of the grace necessary for his remaining steadfast in that fidelity which he renews to his heavenly Father ; for a ring has ever been considered as the emblematical seal of a faithful and sincere mind. He causes shoes to be put on his feet, by which is signified a protecting grace, to enable him to bridle his passions and to fortify his soul against all scandals which may cause him to stumble. He orders the fatted calf to be killed, that is, he admits him to the divine banquet of the body and blood of his only Son, and causes his heavenly court to celebrate a feast of joy for his happy conversion : in short, he restores him completely to the honour and dignity of his child, and to all the ornaments of virtue and grace which he had forfeited by sin. What an encouragement is this to every poor sinner to quit the husks of swine, and to run to the embraces of so merciful a Father ! If he only repent like the prodigal son, for having left his Father's house, he shall meet with the same kind reception, and shall like him rejoice to see himself restored to his former state of

grace and friendship. To the passing confusion which may attend an humble confession of his guilt, will succeed a peace and pleasing joy, far superior to all the sinful enjoyments of the world.

CHAPTER XCIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD. LUKE XVI. 1—17.

To the parable of the repenting profligate, Jesus added another, by which we are all taught how to redeem by alms the punishment justly due to our sins. It is particularly applicable to the rich, here represented under the figure of a steward, who superintends his master's affairs and collects his rents. One of this description he considers : 1. In his bad management and treacherous breach of the trust reposed in him. 2. In regard to his shrewd policy towards his master's tenants, whom he thus engages to receive him after his disgrace and dismissal. "And he said to his disciples : There was a certain rich man who had a steward : and an ill report was brought to him concerning him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him : What is this I hear of thee ? Give an account of thy stewardship ; for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself : What shall I do, because my lord taketh away the stewardship ? To dig I am not able : to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first : How much dost thou owe my lord ? But he said : An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him : Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another : And how much dost thou owe ? Who said : An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him : Take thy bill and write eighty " paid, so that twenty

only will remain. "And the lord commended the unjust steward," not for his infidelity, but "that he had done prudently," in providing for himself against the evil day: "for the children of this world are wiser in their generation," that is, in their temporal concerns, "than the children of light," in the affair of salvation.

The application of this parable is very obvious, for we are all stewards of the Almighty, who has intrusted to us the care of his goods, and we act the part of faithless and unjust stewards, when we employ the talents of mind or body, of nature or of grace, intrusted to us to any other purpose than that of the divine glory: if therefore we have wasted the goods of our great Master, we have reason to apprehend that he will quickly call us to an account and deprive us of our stewardship. Those words in the parable, *give an account of thy stewardship*, are therefore addressed to every one of us, and we know now how soon we may be called to a dreadful examination, on the issue of which eternity depends. However, this parable seems to be more particularly designed for the rich, because they are more properly styled and considered as the stewards of the Almighty, as having received from him in trust a much larger portion of earthly goods: and although by human laws men are allowed to be the absolute and indisputable proprietors of these goods, yet with respect to God they are not masters, but only stewards and dispensers, and will one day most certainly be called to a strict account as to the use which they shall have made of all temporal blessings. Wherefore, in reference to the above parable, let us consider a person in affluence who has grown old in the enjoyment of worldly honours and pleasures, and who finds himself at the eve of being stript of all by approaching death. Sensible of his past misconduct and of the impending rigour of divine justice, he begins now seriously to look out for some means of provision for the life to come. He considers within himself that he is possessed of great riches, and although they are only a trust confided to his

care, he rightly judges that he can employ them to no better purpose than to disarm the divine justice, by freely distributing them to the poor; thus hoping, as it were, artfully to gain admission to eternal happiness. He therefore inquires diligently into the wants of the poor, and readily relieves them by a charitable distribution of his wealth. The Almighty cannot but applaud the wise policy of this rich man, in thus screening himself from the rigour of his justice, by imposing, as it were, upon his Providence, that is, by a wise distribution of the worldly goods which his Providence intrusted to his care. Wherefore from the preceding parable Jesus infers the necessity of alms-deeds in these words: "And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity," pour forth your riches into the bosom of the poor, "that when you shall fail, they may receive you into eternal mansions." Mammon is a Syriac word for riches, and they are called *unjust* and *iniquitous*, not of themselves, but because they are many times the occasion of unjust dealings, and of all kinds of vice. Riches are defective in many respects; they are likewise treacherous and foreign to our main purpose and concern. However, it is to be fairly presumed, as Christ observes, "that he who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful in that which is greater: and he who is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater," since if he has given way to a small temptation, he cannot be expected to resist others of greater force and violence. "If then," says Christ, "you have not been faithful in the distribution of 'unjust mammon, who will trust you with the' only 'true' riches, the spiritual riches of divine grace? "And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's (for such we may call worldly wealth, which daily passeth from one to another), who will give you that which is your own," that is, how can you in this case hope that God will bestow upon you his spiritual riches and gifts, which, if rightly managed, will be your own for eternity? In effect, the improper use which

we make of the former renders us unworthy of the latter, and our notorious unfaithfulness in lesser matters is more than a presumptive proof that we shall be equally unfaithful in trusts of greater consequence.—Moreover, we may observe, that a neglect of alms implies the absence of a truly Christian spirit, since the duty of giving alms is never omitted but through a blamable attachment to worldly goods. He who is inordinately attached to his riches makes them his idol, and considers them as his God; hence Christ lays down this maxim: “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Now the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him. And he,” knowing the dark recesses of their hearts, “said to them: You are they who justify yourselves before men,” by an appearance of sanctity and disinterestedness; “but God knoweth your hearts” to be tainted with sordid avarice. “For that which is high” and plausible “to men, is an abomination before God. They might perchance answer this accusation by alleging that the law of Moses held out worldly goods as a reward to those who were faithful observers of it. To this Jesus replies, that “the law and the prophets were” in force “until John” the Baptist, and consequently till then earthly goods were promised to men as figures of heavenly ones which they were to look for: but “from that time the kingdom of God is preached” without shadow or figure, “and every one” who aspires to it, “striveth with violence for it,” by mortifying his passions and renouncing all attachment to his worldly goods. The Pharisees might hence imagine that the Gospel was contrary to the law. By no means, added Jesus, “and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail of its accomplishment.” The truth is, that the worldly riches, promised by the law, were no more than shadows and figurative promises, the real object of which were the

solid riches of heaven before mentioned, which alone can make us happy, and completely satisfy the heart of man.

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE RICH GLUTTON AND LAZARUS. LUKE XVI. 19—31.

IN the preceding chapter we have seen the great advantages of riches when well employed in works of mercy : in this we may behold the endless misery which follows the abuse of them. “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, and no man did give him ; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores,” which he patiently permitted, being perfectly content with whatever comfort it pleased God to send him in his sufferings. Thus with the utmost patience Lazarus resigned himself to his forlorn condition ; he made no complaint against the Providence of God, nor did he murmur at the unkind treatment which he received from man. “And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom,” that is, into that particular place of rest where the souls of the patriarchs and of all the just remained, till Christ, by his death, should open heaven to them ; and with them ascend triumphant into glory. Such was the favourable lot of Lazarus when death put an end to his sufferings. “And the rich man also died ; and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw,” in a kind of vision, “Abraham afar off, and Lazarus” now happy in his bosom. “And he cried and said : Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.

And Abraham said to him : Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But" here the scene is reversed, "now he is comforted and thou art tormented ; and besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos," separating the just from the reprobate, "so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said : Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify to them " the reality and importance of this invisible world, "lest they also come into this place of torments ; " for he apprehended, it seems, lest the future damnation of his brethren, occasioned in part by his bad example, might be a sensible addition to his torments. "And Abraham said to him : They have Moses and the prophets" for their instruction : "let them hear them. But he said : No, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him : If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead ; " because such a one could come with no greater authority, could deliver no better motives to repentance, nor give any greater assurance of the truth. Whence we may conclude, that they who pay no regard to an authority so sacred and so universally acknowledged as that of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the Apostles, would be equally inattentive and callous to the testimony of a dead person, raised again to life, by pronouncing him either a phantom or an impostor. But although we suppose them convinced of his resurrection, yet still their obdurate and habitual attachment to a voluptuous life would be more powerful to detain them in the same evil course, than the exhortations of a man risen from the dead would have influence to induce them to a change of life and manners. The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised from the dead, and the wickedness of the soldiers who were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, and who yet, on that very day,

suffered themselves to be hired to bear false testimony against it, are most striking illustrations of this truth.

The above instructive history deserves the serious attention both of the rich and the poor. The former may learn from it the dreadful consequences to be apprehended from riches, when made subservient to sensuality, luxury, and ambition; and the latter are taught, by the example of Lazarus, to make their poverty and sufferings, however grievous to nature, instrumental to their future happiness, by bearing them with patience and resignation to the will of heaven.

CHAPTER XCV.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED JUDGE, AND OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW. LUKE XVIII. 1—8.

PRAYER being the preservative of our faith and of our religion, Jesus Christ proposed a parable, or rather related the history of a real event, to recommend to us perseverance in this holy exercise. “And he spoke a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint,” or be weary at our devotions. This precept of praying always does not consist in a multiplicity of vocal prayers to be recited at all hours upon our knees; for in this sense it would be incompatible with other essential duties. What is here recommended to us is to walk always in the presence of God by a spirit of prayer, of love, and of attachment to his divine Majesty, and frequently to lament, with inward sighs, our daily offences against him; all which may be done in the midst of our occupations. It is thus the saints understood and practised this precept, and thus they became saints.

This parable places before our eyes: 1. A judge noted for the injustice of his decisions. 2. The same judge prevailed upon by dint of prayers and entreaties. The conclusion is obvious, that the Almighty, who is ever just and merciful,

will, by our perseverant prayers, be far more easily prevailed upon to grant us the effect of our petitions. Wherefore, Jesus thus addressed his hearers, "saying: There was a judge in a certain city, who neither feared God nor regarded man," being above every check both of conscience and of honour. By his profligate conduct it plainly appears that he was a Sadducee in his creed, and as such believed his soul to be mortal; and therefore he had no dread of the Divine vengeance after this life, but sacrificed all to his present personal interest. "And there was a certain widow in that city," unjustly oppressed by the overbearing conduct of a powerful opponent. She was destitute, it seems, of every means to secure in her favour the above-mentioned judge, since she possessed neither personal influence, riches, nor credit; and consequently had no prospect of gaining his interest either through fear or hope. Therefore, depending solely upon the justice of her cause, "she came to him saying: Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a long time" pay any attention to her. "But afterwards," finding her absolutely troublesome, he resolved to rid himself of her importunity, by deciding the cause in her favour; and "he said within himself: Although I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow is troublesome to me, I will avenge her, lest, continually coming, she tire me out with reproaches. And the Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge saith" on this occasion, actuated neither by a dread of the Divine vengeance nor by any human influence, but merely in consequence of the woman's unceasing importunity. "And will not God," who is so just and merciful, and so willing to listen to the prayers of the oppressed, "revenge his elect, who cry to him day and night in their distress? and will he have patience in their regard? I say to you, that he will quickly revenge them," and rescue them from all their enemies.

This has probably a particular reference to the latter end of the world, when the faithful shall be oppressed by all manner of persecutions; and therefore it is then they should

redouble their fervent prayers for God's help and protection. But since the number of believers will be but small comparatively with the infinite number of apostates, Jesus insinuates, from the great want of faith at that period, the consequent neglect of prayer, which is founded on faith. "But the Son of man," says he, "coming, will he find, think you, faith on earth?" An expression descriptive of the extreme rarity of that perfect faith which is necessary for perseverance in prayer. In effect, if we may judge from the present alarming state of infidelity in the world, and from the seeming indifference with which Christians perform the great duty of prayer, is there not reason to fear that mankind are fast approaching to that general apostasy from the faith here foretold by our blessed Redeemer?

CHAPTER XCVI.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN. LUKE XVIII. 9—13.

AFTER having declared perseverance to be one of the principal conditions which ought to accompany our prayer, Jesus proceeds to state another condition not less necessary, viz. humility and diffidence in our own merits. "And" therefore, "to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, he spoke this parable," which yet has the appearance of a real history. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican." These, it will appear, were widely distinguished from each other: 1. In the opinion which they conceived of their respective merits. 2. In the object of their prayers. 3. In the success of their petitions. "The Pharisee standing" upright, "prayed thus within himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this Publican. I fast twice in a week: I give tithe of all that I possess." Whilst the Pharisee was thus sounding

his own praises, "the Publican standing afar off," in the outer court allotted to the Gentiles, "would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Who would not have imagined, from outward appearances, that the former of these was about to be loaded with blessings by the Almighty, as being a model of sanctity; and the latter consigned to eternal flames as a profligate convicted by his own confession? Jesus, however, pronounces a very different sentence, declaring that it is not the Pharisee but the humble Publican who is absolved from his crimes. "I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us learn from this example the necessity of humility, and the dreadful consequences of trusting in ourselves as just, or of despising others. Those that are truly just are far from thinking themselves so; they are far from glorying in themselves, far from attributing anything of good to themselves. They are convinced that they have nothing in themselves to which they can trust, and that it is only owing to God's great mercy that they have not been guilty of the most enormous crimes; and therefore they never presume to despise any one, not even the most scandalous sinner, lest they should be found worse than him in the sight of God, through their pride and self-conceit, crimes which they know to be an abomination to the Lord. If we examine the prayer of the Pharisee, we find it full of nothing but of this pride and self-conceit, which was the cause of his condemnation. He neither craved mercy nor grace of God. His whole prayer was only an enumeration of his own good works, with a censure upon the rest of men, and a condemnation of the poor Publican: and as he asked for nothing, so he obtained nothing, but only carried home with him his own condemnation. On the contrary, the Publican sets before us a very different example. He has a true sense of his sins,

and of what he has deserved for them ; and therefore he condemns himself as unworthy to lift up his eyes to heaven, or to come near to the altar of God ; but standing afar off, with his countenance humbly cast down upon the ground, he strikes his breast, saying : “ O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Now this profound humility, this great sense of sorrow and contrition for his sins, which accompanied his prayer, was what rendered it acceptable to God ; it procured him a favourable audience, and a ready discharge from all his sins ; and he went home justified in the sight of God and highly pleasing to him, whilst the proud Pharisee, who was so vain and conceited of his own good works, met with nothing but contempt and humiliation ; for God “ resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble ” (James iv. 6).

CHAPTER XCVII.

CHRIST SHOWS THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM.
LUKE XVII. 20—25.

JESUS here states to the Pharisees the wide difference between his kingdom and that of Antichrist. *His* is all interior and spiritual, whilst that of Antichrist is earthly and tyrannical. Wherefore, “ being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come ? he answered them, and said : The kingdom of God cometh not so as to be observed. Neither shall they say : Behold he is here, behold he is there : for lo the kingdom of God is within you,” and the blessings of it you may now enjoy by believing in him whom God hath sent to announce to you his will. The Pharisees had frequently heard Jesus declare that the kingdom of God was at hand, and they now requested him to specify the precise period of time when this great revolution would take place. They were prepossessed with the erroneous idea of a temporal and glorious sovereignty which the Messiah would establish in the world, and this idea the Jews retain to the

present day ; in consequence of which they flatter themselves with the expectation of reigning over all other nations.

Wherefore, to the question proposed by the Pharisees, Jesus replied, that his kingdom was not discernible by any outward marks of power and splendour, such as they expected ; nor was it to be preceded by any visible, extraordinary signs to point out his coming. It was to be wholly spiritual, invisible, and interior. But this empire of Christ within us is not the less real because it is concealed from human view ; it extends itself over the whole man, both as to soul and body ; its throne is the heart or will of man ; its sovereign law is love and charity ; its orders or commands are the efficacious graces and inspirations of the Holy Ghost ; its subjects are the several powers of the soul, particularly our understanding, our will, and our corporeal senses ; the war that is carried on in this empire is betwixt our passions and our reason ; the service required of us is the performance of good works ; the rebellions that arise in it are our several temptations and sins ; and lastly, the total overthrow of the state is an entire apostasy from the law and service of God.

Jesus then “ said to his disciples,” in order to engage them to profit now of their present happiness in possessing him, “ the days will come when you shall desire to see one day of the Son of man,” such as you now enjoy, “ and you shall not see it. And they will say to you : See here ” the Messiah, “ and see there ; but go ye not after nor follow them ; for as lightning flashing ” suddenly “ from under one part of the heavens, shineth ” instantly “ on those things that are under the heavens, so shall the coming of the Son of man be in his day ; ” he will come suddenly with a splendour and majesty that will surprise the whole world. “ But first he must suffer many things, and be rejected by this ” blind “ generation,” and the passion and death he will undergo as to his natural body is a presage of the passion or severe trial which his mystical body, the Church, will have likewise to undergo in the last age of the world.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

JESUS EXHORTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE NARROW GATE, AND ANNOUNCES HIS DEATH AT JERUSALEM. LUKE XIII. 22—35.

JESUS was yet in Perea, which, with respect to Judea, is situated on the other side of the Jordan. “And he went through the cities and towns, teaching and making his journey towards Jerusalem: and a certain man said to him: Lord, are they few that are saved?” Jesus gave no precise answer to this question, which was rather curious than useful; “but he said to them” that accompanied him on this occasion: “Strive to enter in by the narrow gate: for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter and shall not be able,” because [they seek not in good earnest, and never sincerely renounce their evil inclinations and passions. “But when the Master of the house shall have entered into” his heavenly mansions, “and shall shut to the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And he answering, shall say to you: I know not whence you are. Then you shall begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. And he shall say to you: I know not whence you are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out,” though their natural descendants and the presumptive heirs of the same heavenly kingdom, inasmuch as you are the lawful successors to that holy land of promise which was a figure or representation of the celestial mansions. “And there shall come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south: and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God,” whilst you, who are, as it were, the natural heirs, shall be for ever excluded. “And behold they that are” now “last,”

to wit, the uncircumcised Gentiles; "shall be first, and they" who "are first" now "shall be last:" he speaks of the Jews as being the people of God, and insinuates that the most illustrious among them, such as the Pharisees, the doctors of the law, and the priests, would be cast out amongst the reprobate. All this, though directly addressed to the Jewish people, is no less applicable to such Christians as, by their wicked and unprofitable lives, merit an exclusion from heaven. These indeed may, in their own behalf, remonstrate to Jesus Christ that they have eaten and drunk at his table, by having partaken of the adorable sacrament of his body and blood, and that they have been hearers of his divine discourses, when his holy word has been announced to them by ministers duly sent by him for their instruction. But they will doubtless have no better success to look for from this their fruitless remonstrance than what the Jews are here taught to expect, if, like them, they neglect the essential duties of that holy religion which Christ came to establish upon earth.

"The same day there came" to Jesus "some of the Pharisees, saying to him: Depart and get thee from hence; for Herod has a mind to kill thee." It is probable that these Pharisees, being irritated against Jesus on account of the severe censures which he had levelled against their wicked lives, had solicited this prince thus cruelly to enforce his authority against a person otherwise indifferent to him, as appears from the inactive part he afterwards took during his passion, when Jesus being brought before him, he showed not the least desire of accelerating his death. From the answer which Jesus gave to this message, it appears that Herod condescended merely to the importunity of the Pharisees, in allowing them to make use of his name and authority in order to intimidate and expel him from his dominions. When this peremptory message was brought to Jesus, "he said to them: Go and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the

third day I am consummated" by death. "Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following," till I arrive at Jerusalem: "because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

From the topic of his approaching death, Jesus takes occasion to reproach the city of Jerusalem with its ingratitude, and to denounce against it the most dreadful menaces. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee! how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold," in punishment of your ingratitude in rejecting me, "your house shall be left to you desolate," and abandoned by the Almighty, and so even to the end; "and I say to you, that you shall not see me till the time come, when you" shall own me to be the Messiah, and "shall say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

CHAPTER XCIX.

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS TO LIFE, AFTER HE HAD BEEN DEAD
FOUR DAYS. JOHN XI.

At the same time that Herod sent an order for Jesus to quit his dominions, a subject of a particular nature recalled him into Judea. For "there was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair; whose brother Lazarus was sick)." St. John gives so exact and minute a detail of this transaction, as to stamp the most evident marks of truth on every part of his narration. "His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death," because ultimately to terminate in life: "but" is ordained "for the glory of God," viz. that "the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved

Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus ;” which observation is made by the Evangelist, lest the delay of his journey should be imputed to any motive of indifference or disregard on the part of Jesus. “ Having therefore heard that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days,” as it were to allow time for the fatal event of his death to take place, or rather that, after his death actually happened, he might have an opportunity of working a miracle even of greater magnitude than that which was required at his hands. “ And after that, he said to his disciples : Let us go into Judea again. The disciples replied : Rabbi, but just now the Jews sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again ? Jesus answered : Are there not twelve hours of the day ? If a man walk in the day time, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world : but if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not with him.” By this metaphorical language he gave them to understand that the time of his life was regulated by his Father, and that till night, that is, till the hour of his death was come, he had nothing to apprehend from his enemies. “ These things he spoke, and afterwards said to them : Lazarus our friend sleepeth ; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep,” intimating that he could as easily raise him from the dead, as wake him out of sleep. “ His disciples therefore said : Lord, if he sleep, he will be safe,” considering this as a favourable symptom of his recovery. “ But Jesus spoke of his death : and they thought that he spoke of his ” natural “ rest by sleeping. Then Jesus said to them in plain terms : Lazarus is dead : and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ” seeing the miracle which I am going to perform, by raising him to life, “ you may believe ” more firmly that I am the Son of God : “ but let us go to him ” without further delay. “ Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus,” seeing that his brethren showed no inclination to obey this proposal, “ said to his fellow-disciples,” with a fortitude of mind worthy of himself and of every follower

of Jesus Christ: "let us also go that we may die with him. Jesus therefore came and found," upon his arrival in Bethania, "that he had been four days already in the monument. (Now Bethania was near to Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off)," that is, about two miles east of it. "And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother." Providence likewise seemed purposely to have directed them thither with a view to their being witnesses of the wonderful event about to take place. "Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him, but Mary sat at home," paying due attention to her compassionate visitors. "Martha then said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Which words do not imply any want of faith or confidence in Jesus, but express merely her harmless sensibility in lamenting that her brother's sickness had most unseasonably happened at a time when he was far distant: hence she added: "But now also I know, that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha," observing that no precise time was mentioned for this, whether it should be now, or only at the general resurrection, dared not to interpret this promise as if immediately to take place, and therefore "saith to him: I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus" now explained to her in what manner the event was to happen; but previously he required of her a distinct profession of faith, that he was the source and author of the general resurrection as to the bodies of mankind, as well as of eternal life with respect to their souls; and he "said to her: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead shall live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever;" speaking not of that corporeal or transitory death which her brother, though his faithful follower, had experienced, but of the eternal death of the soul. He then asked Martha: "Believest thou

this? She," breaking out into an act of perfect faith, "saith to him: Yes, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." In this act of faith was comprised a full assent to every other article: but as yet she received no positive assurance of the speedy resurrection of her brother to life. "And having said these words, she went and called her sister Mary privately, saying: The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard this, she rose up quickly, and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town: but he was still in that place where Martha had met him:" for, to obviate every suspicion of collusion respecting Lazarus, he chose that the Jews should be witnesses of his entrance into Bethania, and of every part of the ensuing transaction. "The Jews therefore who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw that Mary rose up speedily, and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the monument to weep there:" for this was the custom of those times. "Mary then, when she was come where Jesus was, seeing him, fell down at his feet, and saith to him: Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in spirit, and troubled himself;" for as Christ was truly man, he had the affections and passions of human nature; yet so that he was master even of the first motions, which could not raise in him any involuntary disturbance or disorderly inclinations. He permitted therefore, or rather, as it is said, raised within himself these affections of grief and compassion in common with all present on this occasion, "and said: Where have you laid him? They answer: Come, Lord, and see. And Jesus wept:" thus giving them a mark of his human nature, when he was going to give them a proof of his divinity. "The Jews therefore said: Behold how he loved him! But some of them said: Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not

die ? ” This their remark could only proceed from an absolute conviction of his being dead, and the impossibility of his being now raised to life. “ Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the sepulchre ; now it was a vault ” excavated in the earth, “ and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith : Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead,” imagining that he sought only to soothe his feelings, by taking a last farewell of the remains of his beloved friend, remonstrated, and “ saith to him : Lord, by this time he stinketh ; for he has been four days. Jesus saith to her : Did not I say to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? They took therefore the stone away ” from the place where the dead was laid, “ and Jesus lifting up his eyes, said : Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou dost always hear me, but because of the people who stand about have I said it ; that they may believe that thou hast sent me ” into the world. “ When he had said these words, he cried out with a loud voice : Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them : Loose him, and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the ” extraordinary “ things that Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them,” remaining obstinate in their incredulity and perverse dispositions, “ went ” in haste “ to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done.”

CHAPTER C.

THE FIRST COUNCIL HELD BY THE PHARISEES AGAINST JESUS.

JOHN XI. 47—56. LUKE IX. 51—56.

“ THE chief priests therefore, and the Pharisees,” were no sooner informed of the wonderful resurrection of Lazarus,

than they “gathered a council,” consisting of seventy-two persons, “and said” to one another: “What are we a doing?” why are we so slow and remiss in our proceedings, “for this man doth many miracles? If we let him go, all will believe in him,” as their expected king and Messiah, “and the Romans,” supposing that we are setting up a king in opposition to them, “will come and take away our place and nation.” These were the reasons of policy which induced them to get rid of Jesus, and they were in fact real prophecies of what was to happen to them in consequence of putting him to death.

From the following decision of Caiphas, it appears that some few declared themselves in favour of Jesus; at least it is not to be doubted that Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, espoused his cause: they probably urged in his favour that he was void of ambition, that the power he had repeatedly shown bespoke its Divine origin, and that he had ever made the public good his primary object and concern. “But one of them, named Caiphas, being the high priest that year,” who had therefore to collect the votes of the council, opposed every argument urged in favour of Jesus, and “said to them: You know nothing” of the real state of the case, “neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”

These words of Caiphas had a double meaning: one, in the intention of Caiphas, which was wicked and abominable, as implying that the safety of the commonwealth was to be secured even by means the most unjust and unwarrantable, such as the shedding of innocent blood; and another, designed by the Holy Ghost, which was Divine and prophetic, as implying that it was highly advantageous that one man should suffer death, in order to redeem all mankind from eternal perdition. “And” in “this” sense “he spoke not of himself: but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation” of the Jews.

“And not only for” this “nation, but to gather together in one” body “the children of God, that were dispersed” through the world. “From that day, therefore, they devised” how “to put him to death. Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but he went into a country near the desert, into a city that is called Ephrem :” but in the Greek it is called Ephraim, which some think to be Ephron, in the tribe of Juda, while others, with greater probability, place it in the tribe of Ephraim, about twenty miles to the north of Jerusalem : “and there he abode” for some space of time, “with his disciples.” This example of Jesus, in withdrawing from persecution, has been a sanction to the faithful in succeeding ages to consult their safety by flight in times of danger and persecution. “And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves” from such legal impurities as they might have contracted. Of the several species of these impurities, there were some which rendered persons unclean during eight days, and which, therefore, had they not duly purified themselves, would have prevented their partaking of the paschal lamb until the succeeding month, agreeably to what Moses ordained (Numb. ix. 10). Many of these persons were greatly attached to Jesus, and “they sought therefore for” him, “and discoursed one with another, standing in the temple : What think you” can have prevented him, “that he is not come to the festival-day? And the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders, that if any one should know where he was, he should give notice, that they might apprehend him. And it came to pass, when the days of his assumption” out of this world “were accomplishing, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” viewing with an undaunted courage that death which he foresaw there awaited him. “And he sent messengers before him” into those places through which he was to pass, “and going they entered into a city of the Samaritans to prepare” the

necessaries of life "for him" and his followers. "But they received them not, because his face was" evidently "of one going to Jerusalem," for the celebration of the Passover; which they considered as a high affront offered to their temple upon Mount Garisem, where they imagined the feasts and ceremonies of religion ought to be performed instead of Jerusalem. "And when his disciples, James and John, had seen this" inhospitable treatment, they resented it more than the others, and "they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them," in a manner similar to that of Elias, when he punished the soldiers of the king of Israel? "And turning about he rebuked them saying: You know not of what spirit you are," and that the spirit of the Gospel, which you ought to follow, is the spirit of mercy, mildness, and forbearance. "The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save" them. "And they went into another town," which afforded them a more humane and hospitable reception.

CHAPTER CI.

JESUS, THE THIRD TIME, FORETELLS HIS DEATH. MATT. XX.
17—19. MARK X. 32—34. LUKE XVIII. 31—34. THE
AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE.
MATT. XX. 20—23. MARK X. 35—45.

WHILST "they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem," their conversation turned upon two very different topics: the first was the prediction which Jesus made to his Apostles of his approaching sufferings and death; the second was the ambitious request of the two sons of Zebedee. "And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished" at his intrepidity and resolution in thus going into the midst of his enemies: "and following" after him, they "were afraid," and full of apprehension. "And taking again the twelve disciples apart, he began to tell them the things that

should befall him ; and said to them : Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified." Yes, "he shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon : and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again" to enter into his glory. "And they understood none of these things," because, like the rest of the Jews, they were fully prepossessed with the idea that the Messiah would be immortal. "The meaning," therefore, "of these words was hid from them, and they did not conceive the things that were spoken." But the motive of Jesus, in delivering this prediction, was to convince them, when, on a future day, they should recollect all that was past, that his passion and death, so far from surprising him unawares, had been ever present before his eyes, and that he had foreseen and foretold to them the most material circumstances concerning it.

"Then came to him" Salome, "the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with her sons, adoring him" upon her knees, "and asking something of him ;" for as they had heard Jesus mention his resurrection, they judged that his reign was at hand, and were therefore ambitious of securing to themselves the first dignities in his kingdom. "Who said to her : What wilt thou ? She saith to him : Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom. And Jesus," without taking notice of the mother, who made this request in behalf of her sons, "answering, said to them : You know not what you ask." In effect, carried away by a spirit of ambition, they erroneously figured to themselves some high and lucrative post in an earthly or temporal kingdom, and this at a time when they should have been preparing themselves for conflicts and battles, after the example of their

Lord and Master now going to a disgraceful cross. Jesus, therefore, adverting to his sufferings, said to them : “ Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink ? or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized ? But they said to him,” without fully comprehending the import of his words : “ We can. And Jesus saith to them : You shall indeed drink of the chalice that I drink of, and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, you shall be baptized. But to sit on my right hand or on my left, is not mine,” as man, “ to give to you,” especially whilst in these dispositions of pride and ambition ; “ but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father. And the” other “ ten ” Apostles “ hearing it, were moved with indignation against the two brethren James and John. But Jesus called them to him,” and explained the true nature of those dignities and offices of his kingdom, which they had erroneously conceived to be of a temporal nature, assuring him that there was a wide difference betwixt the dignities of his kingdom and those of this world, both in regard to the persons enjoying these dignities, and the use which they made of their authority. “ And he said : You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them,” in an arbitrary and despotic manner, “ and they who are greater, exercise power over them,” their chief law being their own will. “ It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister,” because he is to consider the salvation of his brethren as the sole end of his actions. “ And whosoever will be first among you, shall be the servant of all,” and as such must make his will and desires bend to the spiritual necessities of others. Jesus then enforces this doctrine by his own example : “ For even the Son of man,” says he, though greater than all the kings of the earth, “ is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many,” like to a slave who should sacrifice his own life to save the life of his master.

The holy fathers take occasion, from the example of St. James and St. John, to caution us against ambition and the desire of worldly honours. In effect, if these two Apostles, though trained up for three years in the school of Christ, were still infected with this leaven of self-esteem and applause, it is recorded as a warning for us, lest this subtle evil should find its way, with far greater ease, into our unguarded souls. We should ever remember what Christ tells his Apostles on this occasion, viz. that we know not what we ask for, when we solicit honours, preferments, and such like temporal goods, which, instead of bringing us nearer to our God, are too apt to carry us away from him. Let us first drink with Christ of the chalice of his passion, let us take up our cross and follow him, and thus we shall prove ourselves to be his true disciples, and as such be entitled to sit down with him on his throne, to reign eternally with him in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER CII.

THE CONVERSION OF ZACHEUS. MARK X. LUKE XIX. 1—10.

“AND they came to Jericho,” followed by an immense concourse of people: “and entering, he walked through” the town. “And behold there was a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the Publicans, and he was rich.” We are here to take notice of three different steps in the conversion of this opulent worldling which deserves our attention. These were: 1. An ardent desire of seeing Jesus. 2. The honourable reception which he gave him in his house. 3. The cheerful and complete restitution which he made of all his ill-acquired property. “Zacheus,” having never yet beheld Jesus, “he sought,” on this occasion, “to see” him, “who he was; and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature. And running before, he climbed up into

a sycamore tree, that he might see him ; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, he saw him, and said to him, Zacheus, make haste and come down : for this day I must abide in thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him with joy. And when all saw it, they murmured, saying, that he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But Zacheus," who doubtless heard these several murmurs of the people against the choice of Jesus, was desirous of showing that he was not undeserving of the honour conferred upon him, and upon the spot pledged himself to the performance of two acts, the one of a perfect charity, the other of justice and restitution, but in a superior degree, and greatly beyond what could be expected from him. Wherefore, " standing he said to the Lord : Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four-fold." There was no obligation of making so superabundant a satisfaction, but Zacheus voluntarily chose to allay the remorse of his conscience by following literally the precept (Exod. xxii. 1), which required for every sheep stolen the restitution of four others to the injured party. Moreover, as Zacheus could not know the several individuals whom in the course of his profession he might have wronged, he could no otherwise execute his design than by openly announcing it to the public : which, as, on the one hand, it was a severe humiliation to him, so, on the other, it exposed him not a little to the almost certain chance of having much more claimed of him than what he really owed. " Jesus," pleased with this perfect and disinterested sacrifice which he now made of his worldly interests, which had been hitherto his predominant passion, " said to him : This day is salvation come to this house ; because he also is a son of Abraham," and is now become a true imitator of the faith and justice of that holy patriarch. He added, that they were not to be surprised if God granted this favour to a sinner such as he had been : " For the Son of man," says

he, "is come to seek and to save that which was lost" by sin.—Hence the greatest sinners need not despair, since God himself seeks to save them.

CHAPTER CIII.

PARABLE OF A NOBLEMAN, WHO GOING A LONG JOURNEY LEFT DIFFERENT SUMS OF MONEY IN THE HANDS OF HIS SERVANTS TO TRADE WITH IN HIS ABSENCE. LUKE XIX. 11—28.

"As they were" attentively "hearing these things," Jesus "added and spoke a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they imagined that the kingdom of God would" there "immediately be manifested" with pomp and splendour. "He said therefore," with the view of rectifying their mistake, and convincing them that their expectations were not to be fulfilled until after a considerable period: "A certain nobleman went into a far country, to take possession of a kingdom, and" afterwards "to return. And having called ten of his servants, he gave to them ten" *sums of money*, "and said to them: Traffic with them till I come back. But his citizens hated him: and sent a message after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us. And it happened that he returned after he had received his kingdom: and he commanded his servants to be called, to whom he had given money, that he might know how much every one had acquired by traffic. Now the first came and said: Lord, *thy money* hath made ten times *as much*. And he said to him: Well done good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities. And another came and said: Lord, *thy money* hath made five times *as much*. And to this man he said: Be thou also over five cities. And another came and said: Behold here thy *piece of money*, which I have kept laid up in a napkin," for

fear of losing it: "for I feared thee, because thou art a severe man; thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest what thou didst not sow. He saith to him: Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou didst know that I am a severe man, taking up what I have not laid down, and reaping what I have not sown. And why didst thou not give my money to the bank, that I at my return might have exacted it with usury? And he said to them that stood by: Take *the money* from him, and give it to him that hath ten *such pieces*. And they said to him: Lord, he hath ten pieces" already. "But I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound: but from him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken from him. Now as for those my enemies, who would not have me reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me. And having spoke these things, he led the way going up to Jerusalem;" for he was impelled by a holy ardour to consummate there his sacrifice for the redemption of the world.

In this parable Jesus represents himself under the character of a person distinguished by his high birth and sovereign dignity, who departs into a far distant country, there to be confirmed in the possession of a newly acquired kingdom. This distant country is no other than heaven, into which Jesus entered at his ascension to take possession of that sovereignty, which he exercises over all creatures, until the period of his return, which will be the day of judgment. Previous to his departure he calls his servants, and divides amongst them sums of money, with a charge to improve them to the best advantage during his absence. By these ten servants are represented the generality of Christians who, independently of this trust or loan, are already engaged in the service of Christ. These sums of money are the various gifts or gratuitous graces, placed in their hands, for the purpose of being employed in the service of God and the good of souls.

Soon after the departure of this prince into a distant country, his servants forgetting the fidelity they owed him, sent a deputation of some of their members to inform him that thenceforwards they renounced him as their sovereign. The truth, here disguised under this figurative embassy, was realised soon after in that persecution which the Jews, the decided enemies of Jesus, raised against his Church immediately on his quitting the world. Moreover, the several martyrs who were put to death by the synagogue, were as so many persons dispatched by them to announce their determination of rejecting Jesus as their Sovereign.

The account demanded by this prince from his servants, as to the treasure intrusted to their care, is no other than the strict reckoning which at the day of judgment will be exacted from all Christians as to the use which they have made of God's spiritual treasures and graces. When our Lord shall come to judge mankind, he will then abundantly reward those who shall have employed his gifts in a manner agreeable to his intentions; but he will punish with rigour and justice those who, like the wicked servant, shall have mis-employed or abused them. The excuse of this wicked servant for hiding his money in a napkin, viz. the extreme severity of his master in exacting what was his due, is figurative of those idle excuses and pretexts which negligent Christians allege for not complying with the duties and obligations of their holy religion. But the very severity of the Divine law, instead of being a cloak for their negligent conduct, should, on the contrary, make them more diligent and fervent in the performance of every Christian duty: otherwise Christ will treat them as he did the wicked servant. The prince condemns this bad servant to lose what had been intrusted in his hands, and orders it to be given to that servant who by his industry had acquired ten times as much: and this decision is founded on the most equitable principles, that he who by his industry and labour has gained something, is well entitled to receive a further reward; whilst,

on the other hand, he who by his negligence has not that which he ought to have, deserves to have even that little taken from him which yet remains in his hands.

The last circumstance recorded in this parable is the punishment inflicted by this prince upon those rebellious subjects who refused to acknowledge him for their sovereign. He causes them to be put to death in his presence. This is a representation of that eternal death to which the infidel Jews and impious Christians shall be condemned by Jesus Christ at the last day, when in company with devils they will be cast into the abyss of hell, to burn there for all eternity.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE TWO BLIND MEN NEAR JERICHO. MATT. XX. 30—34.
MARK X. 46—52. LUKE XVIII. 35—43.

ON the following day, “as” Jesus “went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a very great multitude, Bartimeus the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the wayside begging,” in company with another person who laboured under a similar misfortune. St. Mark and St. Luke speak only of one of them, named Bartimeus, as being the most noted, but St. Matthew mentions both. That the three Evangelists relate the same miracle, appears from the circumstances agreeing together. We have given the narration of St. Mark and St. Luke in relation only to Bartimeus, it being more circumstantial than that of St. Matthew. We may admire on this occasion: 1. The great faith of these blind men. 2. Their firmness and constancy. 3. Their gratitude towards their benefactor. “And when” Bartimeus “heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant, and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by: who, when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out, and to say: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that

went before rebuked him," alleging that Jesus was yet at a distance, and that it was needless for him thus to tire himself and the passengers with his incessant noise. And many of the succeeding crowd "charged him" likewise "to hold his peace." But he was loath to believe implicitly what they said, and being apprehensive lest Jesus should pass by without taking notice of him in his misery, "he cried a great deal the more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called, and to be brought to him. And they called the blind man, saying to him: Be easy, take courage; arise, he calleth thee. Who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to him. And when he was come near, Jesus asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus," full of compassion, "said to him: Receive thy sight: go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him in the way, glorifying God. And all the people" likewise "when they saw it, gave praise to God."

In this blind man we behold an image of that spiritual blindness which is caused by sin, and which is a far more deplorable evil than corporeal blindness. Unfortunately, however, it is but little noticed or apprehended by the generality of mankind. If, however, we judge of things according to the infallible word of God, we shall consider the *inward* blindness of a sinner to be a much greater evil than any exterior blindness that can befall him; this last is only a privation of the light of day, and the other is a privation of the light of grace and of glory. The light of this world is indeed grateful and pleasant to behold; but though a great blessing, it is only what we have in common with the brute creation; it serves only to distinguish material objects. But the light which Christ communicates to the soul enables us to know God and his sacred truths, to discern good from evil, and to distinguish the way of salvation from that of damnation; in short, it is this light which

elevates us above all inferior creatures, which dissipates the spiritual darkness caused by sin and our unruly passions, and which alone can bring us to the true light of eternal glory.

CHAPTER CV.

THE SECOND ANOINTING OF THE FEET OF JESUS. MATT.
XXVI. 6—13. MARK XIV. 3—9. JOHN XII. 1—9.

WHILST Jesus was in retirement at Ephraim, “the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders, that if any man knew where he was, he should give notice, that they might apprehend him” (John xi. 56). Jesus was fully aware of this, and to save them the trouble of a further search, he now voluntarily threw himself in their way, and thereby placed it in their power to execute, if they durst, their evil designs against him. “Jesus therefore, six days before the Passover,” that is on the Saturday, “came to Bethania, where Lazarus was, he that had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made him a supper there, in the house of Simon the leper. And Martha served” on this occasion, as was her usual manner: “but Lazarus was one of them that were at table with him,” and thus gave sufficient proofs as to the reality of his being raised to life. “Mary therefore,” to contribute her share to the honour and respect shown to Jesus on this occasion, “took a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and” this she did after having previously wiped his feet with her hair. And “breaking the alabaster box,” either from a desire of emptying every drop of the perfume in this laudable purpose, or else to avoid loss of time, “she poured it on his head as he was at table. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” It was to tender to Jesus the supreme homage of her adoration, that prostrate at his feet she offered the sacrifice of her perfumes, an offer-

ing which was far more pleasing to him on account of the devotion which accompanied it, than for the fragrancy which it diffused through the whole house.

“And the disciples,” being present on this occasion, and “seeing” what was done, “were angry, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made? for this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,” nearly equivalent to nine guineas, “and given to the poor: and they murmured against her,” especially “one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,” Simon’s son, “he that was about to betray him:” and he “said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because,” in fact, “he was a thief,” and so, under the cloak of a pretended zeal for them, was pleading the cause of his own avarice; “for having the purse, he carried the things that were put therein,” and thus wished for an opportunity of secreting a part to his own private use. Mary, we may imagine, was not a little perplexed at the blame thus cast upon her; yet she chose to place her cause in the hands of Jesus, to whom in fact it belonged, since by allowing the perfume to be thus used upon his person, he had tacitly approved of the action itself. Wherefore, “Jesus knowing” the murmurs of his disciples, “said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? Let her alone” in the use of this precious ointment, “that she may keep it against the day of my burial;” intimating hereby, that in this action she had in view to perform towards him the last offices of her esteem and affection. “She hath,” says Christ, “wrought a good work upon me; for the poor you have always with you, and whensoever you will, you may do them good, but me you have not always. What she had” in her power, “she hath done” for me. “For in pouring this ointment upon my body, she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial,” and to render me an honour during life which she will not have an opportunity of showing me after death. “Amen I say to you, where-

soever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her" respect towards my person, highly redounding to her honour. Of this prophecy we witness the accomplishment whenever we hear this portion of the Gospel read at the mass. As Jesus remained in Bethania during the Sabbath-day, "a great multitude therefore of the Jews knew that he was there," and hastened to him: "but they came not for Jesus's sake only, but" from a motive of curiosity, "that they might see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead."

This wonderful miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, so well attested as to all its circumstances, was proof against all the calumnies of the chief priests. The very appearance of Lazarus amounted to a demonstration that Jesus was the Son of God; and hence many were induced to desert the party of the Pharisees, to attach themselves to him. In hopes, therefore, of blotting out all traces of an event so prejudicial to their cause, "the chief priests consulted how to kill Lazarus, because many of the Jews, on his account, went off, and believed in Jesus." But the Almighty allowed them not to execute their design, which was as foolish as it was wicked: for if Christ could raise him to life from a natural death, says St. Austin, he could surely, with equal ease, have restored him to life when murdered by them. It is an ancient tradition that Lazarus lived thirty years after our Saviour's death.

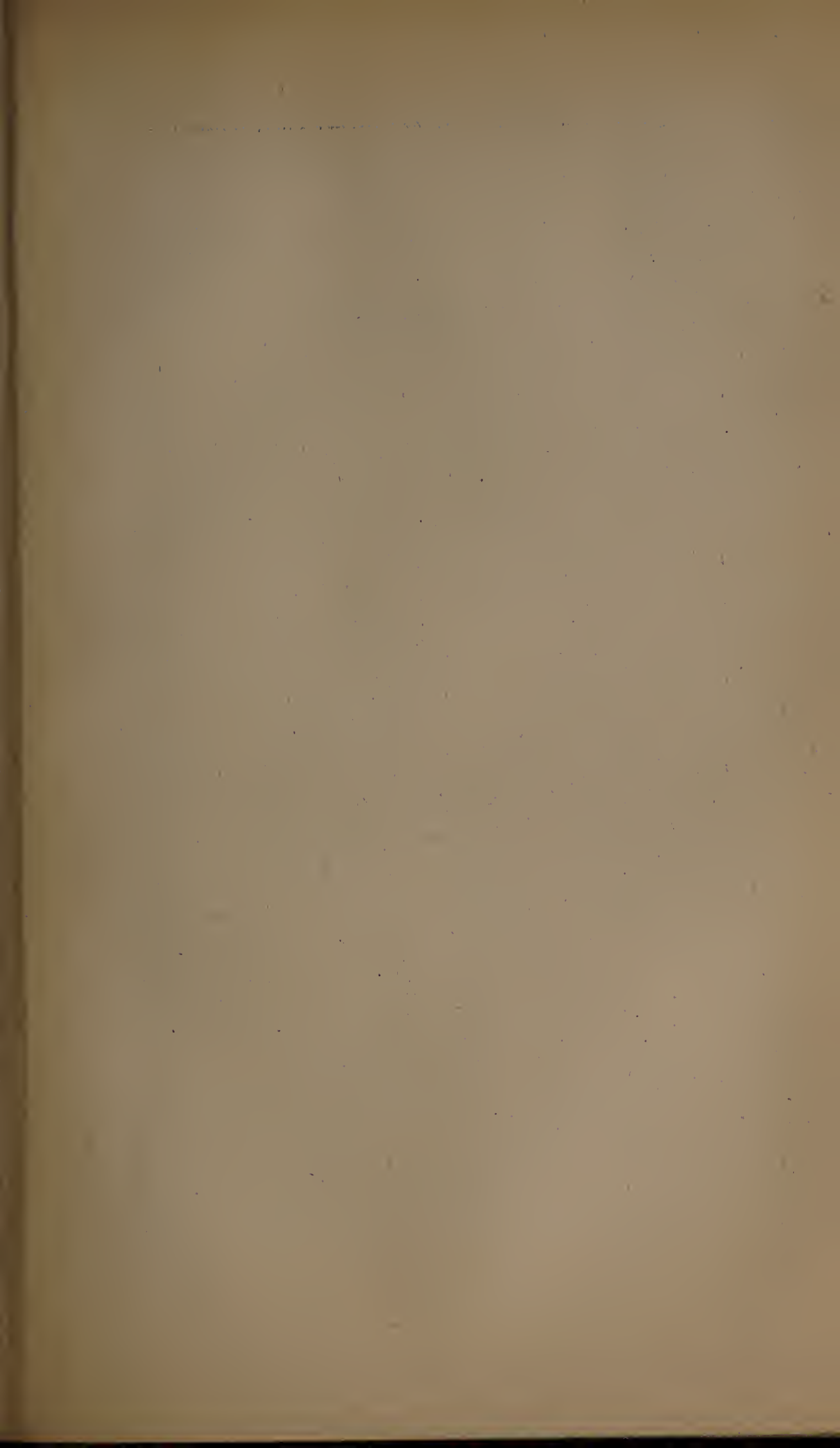
CHAPTER CVI.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS INTO JERUSALEM. MATT.
XXI. 1—11. MARK XI. 1—11. LUKE XIX. 28—44.
JOHN XII. 12—19.

"AND on the following day," viz. the first day of the week, which answers to our Sunday, Jesus departed from Bethania

together with his disciples, to make his solemn entry into Jerusalem in quality of the Messiah. And as in order to fulfil the ancient figures, he chose that very night for the institution of the passover of the new law, which was set aside for the immolation of the paschal lamb in the old law, and that very day for the redemption of the world, in which God's people had formerly been redeemed from their Egyptian bondage, so was he also pleased to make his entry into Jerusalem, in order to his sacrifice, on the very day on which, by the appointment of the law (Exod. xii. 3), the lamb was brought there to be sacrificed at the passover. Of this scene the chief priests and the Pharisees would undoubtedly be spectators. "When they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to" the midway between Bethania (which he had just quitted) and "Bethphage," a small village of the priests at the foot of "the mountain called of Olives" towards the east, "then Jesus sends two of his disciples," probably Peter and John, "and saith to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately at your coming in thither you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, upon which no man hath yet sat. Loose them and bring them to me; and if any man shall ask you: Why do you loose him? Say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" Zachary, "saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion: behold, thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke."

The daughter of Sion here spoken of is the city of Jerusalem, and she is informed that her king, her expected Messiah, would come to her in a style widely different from that of earthly kings. They are proud and haughty, whilst he, on the contrary, is full of meekness; they are carried about in the most magnificent vehicles; he is mounted on an ass, the emblem of mildness and simplicity. "And the disciples going did as Jesus commanded them. And going their way





TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS INTO JERUSALEM.

they found the " ass and " colt tied before the gate without, at the meeting of two ways, and they loosed him. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said to them : What are you doing to loose the colt ? Who said to them, as Jesus had commanded them : Because the Lord hath need of them ; and they let him go with them. And they brought the ass and the colt to Jesus. And they lay their garments on " the back of the young ass, as a species of saddle, and having thus rendered the riding upon it more commodious and becoming, " they made him sit thereon."

But however mean and humble the equipage of Jesus was in this his entry, yet nothing could be more glorious than the reception which he met with from the people. For " a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem," regardless of the animosity and indignation of the Pharisees, " took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried : Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. As it is written (Zachary ix. 9), Fear not, daughter of Sion ; behold thy king cometh sitting on an ass's colt. These things his disciples did not know at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things to him," for the literal accomplishment of this prophecy. " And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut boughs from the " olive " trees, and strewed them in the way," yet in such manner as not to obstruct the passage. " And when he was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of his disciples," transported as it were out of themselves, " began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying : Blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory on high. And the multitudes that went before and that followed," answered these acclamations by similar effusions of joy, and they " cried out, saying : Hosanna

to the Son of David : blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh : Hosanna in the highest." It appears that the Holy Ghost, on this occasion, secretly inspired their tongues, and, through their means, caused loud thanks to be offered to Jesus for an approaching blessing of which as yet they had no conception ; a blessing consisting in the ignominious death which he was about to suffer for their sakes. If therefore the genuine effusions of the heart can alone render applause truly valuable, never was a triumph more honourable to the object of it than was this present triumph of Jesus, although it outwardly displayed nothing but humility and meanness. The Pharisees viewed this scene in a very different light. Whilst "the multitude therefore gave testimony," viz. the same multitude "that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead" (and it was for this reason also that the multitude came to meet him, because they had heard that he had done this miracle), "the Pharisees" were beyond expression filled with jealousy at what they witnessed, and "therefore said among themselves : Do you see that we prevail nothing ? Behold the whole world," in open violation of our authority, "is gone after him."

However, it would have been, in the present moment, extremely unsafe to lay hands on Jesus, whilst so well guarded by the affections of the people, and therefore all that the Pharisees thought proper to do was that "some of" them "from amongst the multitude said to him," in mild terms : "Master, rebuke thy disciples. To whom he said : I say to you that if these should hold their peace, the "very "stones" in the highway will supply their place, and "will cry out" in my praise. The Pharisees, therefore, prudently refrained from violent measures, but failed not to treasure up in their minds the acclamations which they had witnessed, intending in due time and place to make them a subject of accusation against him. But as for Jesus, in the

midst of this triumph, he entertained thoughts widely different from those of the applauding multitude. For "when he drew near" to Jerusalem, "seeing the city," and considering its obstinate blindness, "he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." All these evils which Christ has described as impending over this miserable city, took place accordingly, as we learn from Josephus, whose authority in this respect cannot be called in question, about thirty-eight years afterwards, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem and levelled it with the ground. And this, as Christ declares, was in consequence of its not having known the time when God visited it by his Son during the three years of his ministry in Judea.

CHAPTER CVII.

JESUS DRIVES THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE A SECOND TIME. MATT. XXI. 10—16. MARK XI. 15—18. LUKE XIX. 45, 46. HE CURES THE BLIND AND LAME (MATT. XXI. 14—16), AND FORETELLS HIS GLORIFICATION. JOHN XII. 20—50.

"AND when he had entered Jerusalem" by the golden gate which looks towards the east, and which was not far distant from the temple, "the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." Hence it appears that the crowds of people who had thus honourably attended Jesus, were not so much inhabitants of Jerusalem as of Galilee or of some

other province. The procession terminated at the temple, when Jesus, dismounting from the colt, made his solemn entry into it as into his Father's house, in quality of High Priest and master of this place of worship. Of his authority he gave the most miraculous proof by his zeal against those who profaned it. For upon his entering into the first court, called the court of the Gentiles, or of the unclean, he found it occupied by a fair or market for the purpose of supplying all sorts of victims suitable to the various kinds of sacrifices required by the law, more especially those that were in the greatest demand at this season of the paschal festival, such as lambs, kids, and doves, which those Jews who came from distant parts could not conveniently bring with them. In former times this species of merchandise was sold in the city, or in the neighbouring villages, and not in the temple : but the priests had thought proper to consult at once both their own private advantage and the convenience of the public, by allowing this trade to be carried on in the first court of the temple, which was of considerable extent. They likewise permitted the money-changers to fix their station there, whose trade was necessarily connected with other species of traffic ; and they derived no inconsiderable profit from the rents arising from the space thus occupied by them. "And when" Jesus "was entered into the temple," he was struck with the indignity here offered to the Deity ; and viewing the holy place thus turned into a common market, he was immediately inflamed with Divine zeal. Taking, therefore, a scourge into his hands, "he began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And he suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple." St. Jerome justly considers it as one of Christ's greatest miracles, that he should singly be able to disperse so great a concourse of people, even in the presence of those very priests who gave a sanction to their profanation.

Jesus justified this action by the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremy; the former of whom points out the particular destination of God's temple, and the latter describes the abuse which is made of it by profanation, and by all manner of crimes. "And he taught, saying to them: Is it not written: my house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations" in their necessities? "But you have made it a den of thieves," by the many injustices, deceits, and perjuries committed by those who trade there under your sanction and authority. "Which" cutting reproaches "when the chief priests and the scribes had heard, they sought" still more "how they might destroy him: for they feared him because the whole multitude was in admiration at his doctrine."

After this instance of justice, Jesus next displayed an example of mercy and compassion. For "there came to him the blind and the lame in the temple, and he healed them." This gave occasion to the children who were present to cause the whole temple to resound afresh with their joyful acclamations, crying out aloud: Hosanna, praise and glory to the Son of David, to the king of Israel. "And the chief priests and the scribes seeing the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David, were moved with indignation, and said to him: Hearest thou what they say? And Jesus said to them: Yes, have you never read" that verse of the eighth psalm, "out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Jesus hereby insinuated, that it was truly the Divine Spirit which opened the mouth of these little children to sound forth his praise, and that these little acclamations were wholly unsolicited on his part.

"Now there were some Gentiles among them who came up" to Jerusalem "to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee," perhaps as to a person known to them, living in Syro-Phe-nicia, "and they desired him, saying: Sir, we would will-

ingly see Jesus. Philip," deeming the request a matter of some difficulty, "cometh and telleth Andrew," his senior in the apostleship: "again Andrew and Philip told it to Jesus," who, viewing in this small number of Gentiles, as it were, the first-fruits of all the Gentile world that in future ages would believe in him, readily consented to allow them access to his person. "And Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" by the faith of all nations. But as this their conversion was not to be effected till after his death, he added: "Amen, amen I say to you: unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it remaineth there alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit:" even so after my death, shall I have much fruit among the Gentiles, by my Apostles, sent to instruct and baptise all nations. And in this my disciples must be ready to follow my example; for, "he that loveth his" temporal "life," so far as to preserve it at the expense of justice, or of truth, or of conscience, by unlawful gratifications, "shall lose it" infallibly for all eternity: "and he that hateth his life in this world," so as to be ready to forfeit it for the sake of truth and of justice, "preserveth it unto life everlasting." He exhorteth his disciples to make this greatest effort of Christian courage by holding out to them the immensity of the reward which they were to receive. "If any man," therefore, says he, "minister to me," and desires to be of the number of my disciples, "let him follow me" even unto death; "and" then "where I am, there also shall my minister be." For "if any man" thus "minister to me" at the hazard of his own life, "him will my Father honour" with an eternal crown of glory in heaven.

At the mention of his approaching death, Jesus chose to humble himself so far as to give an instance of the weakness of nature, by allowing dread and apprehension to take possession of his soul. "Now my soul is troubled," said he. For although he encouraged us to a contempt of death, yet he dissembled not the agitation of mind which he felt at the

prospect of it, but allowed it to be publicly noticed from a motive both of humility and prudence. He even, by his own conduct, pointed out how far his disciples might lawfully endeavour to avoid death, and that was by addressing themselves to God under this severe pressure of the mind, and praying to be delivered from the impending danger. "And what shall I say?" he exclaimed: to whom shall I have recourse? It is to thee, "Father, save me from this hour."

Christ taught them by his example to overcome the natural horror and dread of death, to suppress the sentiments of nature, and to ask merely of God, that he would be pleased to glorify his name by the sacrifice of their lives, under the firm persuasion that it was God himself, who, by a particular providence, placed them under the necessity of undergoing this trial. "But for this cause," said he, "I came into this hour. Father, glorify thy name" by my sufferings and death; may they serve to restore to thee that glory of which sin robbed thee; to make known to men the severity of thy justice, and likewise the excess of thy love. "A voice then came from heaven," to show that his prayer was heard, saying: "I have both glorified it" already by the many miracles thou hast done in my name, "and will glorify it again" by thy resurrection, by the faith of all nations who shall believe in thee, and by the glory resulting from thy death.

"The multitude therefore that stood and heard" a certain indistinct noise, "said that it thundered: others," who heard an inarticulate sound, "said: An angel spoke to him. Jesus answered and said: 'This voice came not because of me,' as it were to satisfy me of the Divine favour, or to comfort me against the fear of death: "but for your sakes," that you may believe in me, and may understand that "now is the judgment of the world," which is about to be delivered from the tyranny of the devil, "now shall the princes of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself;" that is, by faith and love. "(Now this he said, signifying what death he should die)."

Thus Christ declares the very different judgment of God in regard to the devil, now to be vanquished and cast forth, and of the world, now to be freed from his tyranny and drawn to Christ. By this efficacious attraction he would signify the power of his grace, the strong opposition to be raised by the devil against the conversion of mankind, and the weakness of human nature which stood in need of being thus drawn to Jesus Christ. "The multitude," perceiving from the words of Christ that he spoke of his death, "answered him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man," that is thus to suffer? intimating that he could not be the Messiah, if it related to him. "Jesus" did not think proper at the present moment to explain himself more fully: he "therefore" only "said to them," as an inducement for them to believe in him: "Yet a little while, the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light," that is, the children of God himself, to which high honour a firm and ready faith is the best and surest guide. "These things Jesus spoke, and he went away, and hid himself from them," because the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their understanding rendered them unworthy of enjoying any longer his Divine presence and conversation. "And whereas he had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in him." But lest this their obstinate incredulity might scandalise the Gentiles, the Evangelist remarks that nothing happened in their regard but what had been foretold, "that the saying of Isaiah (chap. liii. 1) the prophet might be fulfilled which he said," speaking in the person of the Messiah: "Lord, who hath believed our hearing? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" for the Jews would not acknowledge him, either in the wisdom of his words, or

in the power of his works. St. Paul quotes the same passage (Rom. x. 15) on the same subject. St. John points out from Isaiah the cause of this astonishing incredulity, viz. the blindness of their minds and the obstinacy of their will. "Therefore," says he, "they could not believe because Isaiah said again: He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." And lest the meaning of these words should be applied to some other event, the Evangelist adds: "These things said Isaiah" of the Messiah, "when he saw his glory and spoke of him." For this chapter represents to us, under a sensible, but sublime and glorious figure, the holy Trinity, of which Jesus is the second person. His Divine mission into this world is likewise treated of, and when the Father, with apparent concern, seeks out whom to send, the prophet, who here represents the Son, offers himself in his name, and declares his readiness to assume our human flesh for that purpose.

In relating this general incredulity of the Jews, the Evangelist makes an exception of some individuals. "However," says he, "many of the chief men also believed in him: but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, that they might not be cast out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God;" that is, they preferred the retaining of an honourable rank amongst mankind to the gaining of true glory, which is according to God, and with which he would infallibly have rewarded them in the most ample manner. Thus it appears that the glory of men, and other temporal considerations, are the great obstacles which hinder mankind from seeking and embracing the truth. "But Jesus" making his appearance again in the temple, cried out against these timid converts and the incredulous Pharisees, "and said: He that believeth in me doth not believe in me" only, "but in him" also "that sent me. And he that seeth me" with the eyes of faith,

such as I really am, viz. according to my situation and Divine nature, "seeth him that sent me," we having one and the same essence. "I the" eternal "light am come into the world, that whosoever believeth in me may not remain in the darkness" of error and sin. "And if any man" after this "hear my words, and keep them not, I do not judge him: for I came not to judge the world" at present, "but to save the world." He must not however flatter himself that he shall remain unpunished: for "he that despiseth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day," and shall condemn him for having rejected this Divine light. "For I have not spoken" merely "of myself," without commission from above: "but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is" a sure guide "to life everlasting: what things therefore I speak, as the Father hath ordered me, so do I speak;" and he that despises them despises the words of God, and renounces that eternal life which is offered him. "And having viewed all about, when the hour of evening was come, leaving them, he went out of the city into Bethania," as usual, "with the twelve" Apostles, "and remained there" (Mark xi. 11; Matt. xxi. 17).

CHAPTER CVIII.

JESUS CURSES THE BARREN FIG-TREE, AND EXHORTS HIS DISCIPLES TO FAITH IN PRAYER, AND TO FORGIVE THEIR ENEMIES. MATT. XXI. 17—22. MARK XI. 12—14, 20.

"AND the next day, when they came out from Bethania, returning into the city, he was hungry. And when he had seen afar off a fig-tree, by the way-side, having leaves upon it, he came" to see "if perhaps he might find any thing

upon it. And when he was come to it, he found nothing but leaves: for it was not the time for figs." This hunger, though real and pressing, was not without a mysterious meaning, and afforded him an opportunity of drawing from this fig-tree a subject of instruction both to the Jews and to all his disciples.

In regard to the first, it was a menace, or rather a prediction of the reprobation of the Jews until the end of the world. For he cursed the fig-tree, and "said to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever: and his disciples heard it, and immediately the fig-tree withered away."

It is certain both that Jesus was not deceived in regard to this fig-tree, when going up to it he discovered no fruit, and that the tree itself could not merit so severe an anathema. Yet, however harmless in its own nature, it was culpable relatively to the nation which it represented; for the whole transaction was no other than a prophetic parable. By the fig-tree was represented the Jewish synagogue; the hunger of Jesus was a figure of his extreme desire of finding it productive of good works, such as would be answerable to the great pains which he had taken in its cultivation during the space of more than three years. The leaves of the fig-tree were those pompous words of the ancient law, the temple, the ceremonies, sacrifices, traditions, and all the outward form of worship upon which the Jews plumed themselves, and claimed merit in the sight of God, in proportion as they conceived themselves distinguished above all other nations. Yet all this exterior show was void of good works, the only valuable produce of the tree. By the withering of the tree, which followed the imprecation of Jesus, are represented the reprobation and utter barrenness of the synagogue, which to this day remains as an useless, barren trunk, bearing no fruit to eternal life.

"And they came again to Jerusalem, and" Jesus "was teaching daily in the temple (Luke xix. 47). And the chief priests and the Scribes, and the rulers of the people," having

now no longer to search after him, "sought to destroy him : and they found not what to do to him ; for all the people were very attentive to hear him," and seemed disposed to repel by force any violence they might offer to his person. "And when evening was come, he went forth out of the city, and when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And the disciples seeing it, wondered, saying : How soon it hath withered away. And Peter remembering" the words spoken by Jesus, "said to him : Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou didst curse is withered away."

From the circumstance of this withered tree, Jesus took occasion to hold forth to his disciples an example of the all-powerful efficacy of faith and confidence in God. "And Jesus answering, saith to them : Have ye faith of God ? Amen I say to you, if you shall have faith and stagger not, you shall not only do this of the fig-tree, but also whosoever shall say to this mountain : Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." This promise, which is only in general terms, necessarily implies a restriction, though it be not here expressed, viz. that the thing asked for be such as may tend to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Besides this immovable constancy in faith and confidence in God, which admits of no hesitation or doubt, Jesus requires of them another condition no less indispensably necessary, and that is an entire forgiveness of injuries. "And when you shall stand to pray," says he, "forgive, if you have ought against any man ; that your Father, who is in heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive you your sins."

CHAPTER CIX.

CHRIST JUSTIFIES HIS AUTHORITY AGAINST THE SCRIBES AND ELDERS, BY A QUESTION WHICH HE PROPOSES CONCERNING JOHN'S BAPTISM. MATT. XXI. 23—27. MARK XI. 27—33. LUKE XX. 1—8.—THE PARABLE OF TWO SONS WHOM THEIR FATHER SENT TO LABOUR IN HIS VINEYARD. MATT. XXI. 28—32.

“AND in the day-time he was teaching in the temple : but at night going out, he abode in the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him. And it came to pass that on one of the days,” which was Tuesday, “when he was come into the temple, and was walking” there, teaching the multitudes, he was soon after interrupted by some of the principal persons amongst the Jews, and the day was chiefly spent in a variety of disputes and questions which passed between them. Wherefore, “as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and the Scribes with the ancients met together,” and “came and spoke to him, saying : Tell us by what power thou dost these things,” such as preaching to the people, receiving the honours due only to the Messiah, making a triumphal entry into the temple, and driving thence all the victims destined for the various sacrifices ? “Who hath given thee this authority that thou shouldst do these things ?” This question was grounded upon the justly received principle, that no man can give to himself the authority of the ministry, but must receive it either immediately from God, or from lawful superiors, who derive their authority in a regular manner from those who were originally commissioned by God. Hence they meant to infer, that Jesus had incurred both the guilt of schism and of sedition, by thus intruding himself, without a lawful mission, into an office to which none but the Messiah could have pretensions. This objection Jesus had already

answered beforehand, proving incontestably by miracles, which are the voice of God, that he was sent immediately from God. Hence he says (John xv. 24): "If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin." He now desires that they should solve the objection themselves, by answering a question of a similar nature concerning John the Baptist. "And Jesus answering, said to them: I also have one word to ask you, which if you shall tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John," together with his preaching and doctrine, "from whence was it? from heaven or from men? Answer me." In fact, had they avowed that John was sent by the Almighty, they would have fully answered the question which they proposed to Jesus, since from this acknowledgment of John's Divine mission he could most justly have inferred that therefore his own was stamped with the same Divine authority, because John himself had given to it the most public testimony. The consequence here inferred rests upon this unanswerable argument, that a mission, if uncertain or contested, as his mission was in the present instance, ought justly to be deemed as coming from God, when avowedly acknowledged and approved as such by a man whom God sent and authorised. Now John the Baptist was that person sent by God, and upon their acknowledged opinion of this holy personage the whole argument rests. The Pharisees foresaw the advantage to be derived in favour of Jesus, were they to avow their approbation of John, and likewise the danger to be apprehended for themselves, should they make him the object of their censure. "But they thought within themselves, saying: If we shall say from heaven, he will say to us: Why then did you not believe him? But if we shall say from men, we are afraid of the multitude; the whole people will stone us: for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. For all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed. And answering Jesus, they said: That they knew not whence he was." In

return for this evasive conduct, "Jesus also replied : Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

But previously to his changing the subject of debate, he chose to draw from it an argument of no small confusion to the Pharisees, by reproaching him that they had, by their contempt of the baptism and preaching of John the Baptist, made it fully appear, that all their pretended justice and boasted obedience to God's law were false and imaginary. Wherefore, "he began to speak to them in parables," and asked their opinion upon the following case : "But what think you ? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first, he said : Son, go work to-day in my vineyard : and he answering, said : I will not. But afterwards being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner : and he answering, said : I go, sir, and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will ? They say to him : The first." Without entering into a further explication of the parable, "Jesus saith to them : Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you," who pretend to guide others to it. For of these two sons, the one is a figure of professed wicked livers, the other of the Pharisees. The former were sinners in earnest, and made no difficulty openly to avow their being openly so : the latter, on the contrary, carried the outward garb of a devout life, and made a public profession of piety. Upon the former God lays his injunctions to work in his vineyard, viz. to bring their souls into a due state of cultivation by repentance ; and to this summons they declare, by the whole course of their sinful life, that they pay no regard. Afterwards, however, touched by the example and preaching of John the Baptist, as by the voice of God, they turned from their evil ways, and did sincere penance. God lays a similar injunction upon the Pharisees, who constantly promise to obey him. All their outward show of piety, and professions of sanctity, seem as it were to say : I go, sir ; yet they

remain precisely in the same state, and their obedience goes not beyond their lips. "For John," said Christ, "came to you" from God, leading a penitential and irreproachable life, "in the way of justice, and you did not believe in him," or follow his example: "but the publicans and harlots believed in him," and obeyed his injunctions. "But, you seeing it," yet "did not afterwards repent, that you might believe in him," and this is a just subject of reproach against you, which clearly evinces that all your pretended justice and virtue are founded on deceit and illusion.

CHAPTER CX.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO WICKED HUSBANDMEN. MATT. XXI. 33—46. MARK XII. 1—12. LUKE XX. 9—18.

IN a second parable Jesus lays to the charge of the Pharisees the parricide which they long had in contemplation, and which they had already perpetrated in their hearts. "And" Jesus "began to speak to the people: Hear ye another parable: there was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a strange land for a long time. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent a servant to receive the fruits of the vineyard from these husbandmen: who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away. And again he sent to them another servant: but they beat him also," and "stoned and wounded" him "in the head; and treating him reproachfully, sent him away empty. And again he sent a third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out, and killed him. Again he sent other servants more than the former: and they did to them in like manner: some they beat, others they killed. Then the lord of the

vineyard said : What shall I do ? I will send my beloved son : it may be, when they see him, they will reverence him. Therefore having yet one son most dear to him, he also sent him unto them, last of all, saying : They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said to one another : This is the heir, come let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance : and taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen ? They say to him : He will bring those evil men to an evil end : and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season. Jesus saith to them : " Yes, " he will come " himself, " and will destroy these husbandmen, and will give his vineyard to others. Which they hearing, said to him : God forbid " this misfortune should happen to us. For they saw very well that this parable was addressed to them. " But he looking on them, said : What is this then that is written ? The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes," to see him whom you rejected as a seducer thus made the Saviour of the Gentile world. " Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall," by scandal or incredulity, " fall on this stone, shall be broken " himself, without damaging it in any manner, and yet, though mortally bruised, his cure may be effected by a sincere repentance. " But on whomsoever it shall fall," with all its weight, which shall happen at the last day, " it shall grind him to powder," without the least hope of recovery. " And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke this parable to them : and seeking to lay hands on him the same hour, they feared the multitudes, because they held him as a prophet."

This parable is immediately addressed to the Jews, whom

our blessed Saviour reproaches with their long and tedious ingratitude to God; signifying to them the dreadful judgments they were about to draw down upon themselves by this horrible abuse of the Divine favours. But it contains a no less instructive lesson for Christians, who, considering what Christ has done for them in establishing his Church, that mysterious vineyard which he has planted and watered with his blood, have reason to dread, no less than the Jews, the terrible effects of his indignation, if they abuse the graces conferred upon them, and render not fruit in due season. The kingdom of God shall be taken from them as it was from the Jews, and given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. In effect, what the Jews have suffered, for their wickedness and ingratitude, has also been the fate of many Christian kingdoms and states, and the mournful lot of many once flourishing churches, whose candlesticks are removed and light extinct. The same conduct God observes towards particular persons, in punishment of their repeatedly abusing his graces; he at last withdraws them, and leaves them to themselves, and to the miserable consequences of this merited privation of grace.

CHAPTER CXI.

THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

MATT. XXII. 1—14.

AFTER the heavy accusation brought against the priests and Scribes, Jesus concluded his discourse by a parable addressed to all who persevere in their incredulity. In its three several parts it describes the reprobation of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles to the faith, and the final judgment both of the one and the other. "And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage *feast* for his son."

For the Son of God came down from heaven to wed to himself our human nature by the mystery of his incarnation, and every faithful soul in particular, by a happy union of grace and love. This union is begun here on earth by faith ; it is cemented by charity in all such as are united to Christ, and will be consummated and made perpetual hereafter by the eternal enjoyment of Christ in his heavenly kingdom. “ And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage.” This God did in regard to the Jews by the prophets, by John the Baptist, and even by Jesus Christ himself, “ and ” yet “ they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying : Tell them that were invited : behold I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready : come ye to the marriage.” After the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, the king, in the parable, sent other servants in greater number, viz. his Apostles and disciples, to inform the invited Jews that the banquet was ready ; because the Christian religion being established, the way to eternal happiness was laid open to mankind : that his beeves and fatlings were now killed, viz. that the Messiah had been put to death, was risen again, and now placed on the table of the altar, to be really and truly eaten in all the sacrifices that should be offered up to God until the end of time, because his flesh thus raised again to life and immortality is the only true sacrifice of the new law which succeeds to all the ancient victims of the temple. This is described under the idea of beeves and fatlings. Lastly, he adds, that all things were now ready for their sanctification, and that they had only to enter into the Church, and to sit down at the table of the nuptial banquet. “ But they neglected ” this invitation, so full of love and affection, “ and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize,” according to the various calls of their prevailing passions and worldly engagements. “ And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had

heard it, he was angry, and sending his armies," under Vespasian and Titus, "he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city."

When the Jews, through their own obstinacy, were thus reprobated, God called the Gentiles to occupy their places. "Then saith he to the servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy; go therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests." This has been done by the Apostles and their successors in every age: they have carried the Gospel successively to all nations, and gathered together in the Church, which is the banqueting room, all whom they met, good and bad, worthy and unworthy, as appears by the sequel. Thus all the tables were filled with guests, who seated themselves to partake of the feast. But lest the Gentiles should falsely imagine that to be admitted to this eternal banquet, which begins in this life by faith in Jesus Christ, nothing more was required than to have accepted the invitation, the king is described as entering into the banqueting room, in order to view and examine the several guests. This is what God will do by his Divine Son at the day of judgment. "And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment." By this one man are represented all wicked Christians who, after having entered into the Church by faith in Jesus Christ, have not been careful to clothe themselves with the works of justice and charity, which their faith should naturally produce. As a ragged and unbecoming dress in persons invited to a marriage feast would be deemed an affront to those who gave the invitation, so also nothing can be more unworthy of the holiness of the Christian religion than the wicked lives of its professors. "And the king," addressing himself to this rash and inconsiderate person, "saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having

on a wedding garment? But he was silent," being convicted by the testimony of his own conscience; an image of that confusion which awaits every impenitent sinner at the awful tribunal of the all-seeing Judge. "Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen:" many are called to enter into the Church by faith, but few are chosen to enter heaven, because they strive not by good works to make their calling and election sure.

CHAPTER CXII.

IN ANSWER TO THE ENSNARING QUESTION OF THE PHARISEES,
CHRIST TEACHES US TO GIVE TO CÆSAR WHAT IS CÆSAR'S,
AND TO GOD WHAT BELONGS TO GOD. MATT. XXII. 15—
22. MARK XII. 13—17. LUKE XX. 19—26.

THE third conference which Jesus had with the Jews relates to the political or civil conduct of mankind, as directed and influenced by religion; a subject the more delicate, as it regards one of the most essential rights of the state under which we live. After having taken the city of Jerusalem, and reduced Judea into a Roman province, Pompey imposed a tax upon the Jews, which, if not in the shape of an annual tribute, was paid however by compulsory subsidies, such as the wants of the republic called for. But in the second numbering of the Jewish people, exacted by Augustus, in which Quirinus was the acting magistrate, the Emperor changed this casual contribution into a certain fixed annual tax to be levied by capitation; and this was paid in a particular species of coin bearing the name and portrait of the reigning Emperor. The Jews considered this tax as a badge of slavery, and one Judas, of the province of Galilee, brought himself forward in opposition to it, declaring it to be unworthy of a free people, who adored the true God, to pay

tribute to strangers and idolaters. Although his efforts, and those of his followers, were at that time suppressed by violent measures, yet the doctrine he broached, far from expiring with him, continued to be eagerly patronised by the people at large. On this occasion, "then, the Pharisees going" to a small distance, "consulted among themselves how to ensnare" Jesus "in his speech." They flattered themselves that being a Galilean, he would adopt the general opinion of his countrymen in opposition to earthly potentates; or if, on the contrary, he gave not into their way of thinking, they fully hoped to be able to render him odious to the people as a favourer of the hated capitation tax; and having once obtained this end, they would then be able, without any danger of opposition, to seize upon his person. "And watching him, they sent treacherous men who should feign themselves just." These were "some of the Pharisees" and their disciples, accompanied likewise "with the Herodians," or courtiers of Herod, who were known advocates and supporters of the tax in question. As these were entire strangers to Jesus, the Pharisees imagined that they would be received by him without suspicion. Their great aim was "to take hold of him in his discourse," on his letting fall any expression against the law, or reflecting upon the sovereign; "that" so "they might afterwards deliver him up" as a delinquent "to the authority and power of the governor." These emissaries entered upon their task, by assuming a most modest and backward appearance, with all the exterior garb of persons well affected towards Jesus. "And they asked him, saying: Master, we know that thou art sincere," and "that thou speakest and teachest rightly, and thou dost not respect any person, and carest not for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us therefore what dost thou think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or shall we not give it?" insinuating hereby that their own ideas leaned towards the negative. "But Jesus knowing their wicked-

ness," and "their wiliness, saith to them: Why do ye tempt me, ye hypocrites," to act in violation of the submission which is due to the sovereign power of the state? "Show me the coin of the tribute, that I may see it. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and superscription is this? They answering, said to him: Cesar's. And he said to them: Render therefore to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's." By which expression he plainly determines, in opposition to the error of Judas the Galilean, that the duties of a subject towards his sovereign are by no means derogatory from or incompatible with the duties of religion which we owe to God; that we may acquit ourselves equally of both without prejudice to our conscience, and that it is even our duty to pay such taxes as are imposed for the exigencies of the state. For, in this instance, Jesus declares not only that we may but we ought to give to Cæsar his due; and that so far from its being unlawful, as alleged by certain seditious persons, it is a strict religious obligation, on the part of every subject, to pay what is by lawful authority demanded of him. "And hearing this, they could not reprehend his words before the people: and wondering at his" judicious "answer, they held their peace, and leaving him went their way."

CHAPTER CXIII.

CHRIST CONFUTES THE SADDUCEES, WHO QUESTIONED HIM
CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION. MATT. XXII. 23—33.
MARK XII. 18—27. LUKE XX. 27—38.

THE fourth point of discussion proposed to Jesus was a controverted article of belief concerning the resurrection of the body, which was not admitted by the Sadducees. For on "that same day there came to him some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked

him, saying : Master, Moses wrote unto us, if any man's brother die having a wife, and he leave no children, that his brother should take her to wife, and raise up seed unto his brother," to inherit his name and property. Now upon the strength of this regulation they stated the following supposed case. "There were seven brothers" amongst us : "and the first took a wife and died without sons. And the next took her, and he died without a son. And the third took her : and all the seven in like manner, and they left no seed, and died. Last of all died also the woman. At the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven shall she be ? For they all had her to wife." If she be adjudged to the eldest, the other six will be wronged ; for having successively married her equally with the eldest, they have apparently a similar claim with him. Now it is a thing unheard of, as well as unnatural and unseemly, that she should continue to be at once the wife of the seven brethren together. Hence they boldly concluded it to be a clear consequence, that the resurrection of the body was a thing impossible, and as such absolutely incredible. It would have sufficed for their argument had they made a supposition of only two brethren marrying successively the same wife : but it better suited their purpose of turning the resurrection of the body to ridicule, to state the circumstance of the seven brethren disputing together in the other world for the wife they had married in succession, and pleading against each other the merits of their respective claims.

With a view more fully to refute their error, Jesus traces it to its source, and taxes them with ignorance both of the scriptures and of the infinite extent of God's omnipotence. He begins with stating the wide difference there is between the state of things in this mortal life and in that which is to come. In the present state of things marriage is necessary, and was designed by the Almighty as a resource to repair the losses occasioned by the mortality of mankind. But hereafter, when they shall become immortal, like the angels,

they shall stand no longer in need of it, and the propagation of their species will be perfectly unnecessary. “And Jesus answering saith to them: Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry nor be married: but are as angels in heaven. The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead, shall neither be married nor take wives. Nor can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection,” and as such their life will be wholly spiritual, exempt from all passions, and secure of a blessed immortality, which will render marriage entirely unnecessary.

Jesus now proceeded to prove from scripture the doctrine of the resurrection. To enter into the force of his arguments we must recall to mind that the principal error of the Sadducees was their denying the immortality of the soul, whence they inferred, as a natural consequence, that therefore the resurrection of the body was a thing impossible. Jesus establishes the certainty of the former, in order thence to infer, as a necessary consequence, the possibility of the latter. To this purpose he employs the following reasoning. The soul is immortal, and subsists after its separation from the body. No reason therefore can be brought why the dead should not rise again. For what is the resurrection of the body but the re-union of the soul with the body, the spiritual with the corporeal part of man? “Now that the dead rise again,” said he, “Moses also showed at the” burning “bush;” for “have you not read, that which was spoken by God, saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” Now “he is not the God of the dead,” no one calling himself Lord or king of creatures destroyed and annihilated, “but of the living; for all,” even the dead, “live to him,” as to their souls at present, which will be hereafter united again to their

bodies. "You, therefore, do greatly err" in supposing the patriarchs to be no longer in a state of existence, and capable of serving the Most High. "And some of the Scribes answering, said to him: Master, thou hast said well: and the multitude hearing it were in admiration at his doctrine," and expressed their astonishment at the readiness, clearness, solidity, and acuteness of his answers.

CHAPTER CXIV.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT OF DIVINE LOVE. MATT. XXII.
34—40. MARK XII. 28—34.

"But the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together," and consulted how they might ensnare him without incurring a similar disgrace. "And there came one of the Scribes, a doctor of the law, tempting him;" for "he had heard them reasoning together; and seeing that Jesus had answered them, he asked him" another question, in order to make a further trial of his knowledge. "Master," said he, "which is the great commandment of the law," and "the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first commandment is" that of Deuteronomy (chap. vi. 4), "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God: and" therefore "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first commandment."

In these few words we see expressed the *motives* which call for our love of God, the *manner* how we are to love him, and the *measure* or extent of this love.

I. Of these motives the first is drawn from the name of God, which in Hebrew signifies the first Being, the sovereign Good, the principle and source of all being and of all good, and consequently most amiable on his own account, and solely deserving of being infinitely loved by us. The second arises

from the term *thy God*, which refers to the true people of Israel, and shows the marked distinction with which he had honoured them, by acting as their God in a most particular manner, in choosing them for his own peculiar people, adopting them as his children, and distinguishing them by his favours, preferably to all the other nations of the world. This motive ought likewise the more powerfully to induce Christians to love God, as the utmost they can do for him must fall infinitely short of that immense love which he has first most gratuitously testified in their regard. The third motive arises from the term *Lord*, which implies, that God having, in consequence of his supreme dominion over mankind, an undoubted right to require of them whatever he pleases, yet contents himself with claiming solely their love.

II. The *manner* of our loving God ought to be suitable to the God of truth. He requires us to love him from the bottom of our hearts, with a true, sincere, and solid love ; a love which penetrating inwardly our souls with the tenderest sentiments of affection, shows itself likewise outwardly in the whole tenour of our life. For he who loves God with his lips only, and not with his heart, is a liar and a hypocrite ; and he who loves God merely with his heart, and not with his hands, by not giving proof of his love in the practice of good works, is a sluggard who basely keeps truth in captivity ; and he who loves God with his hands, and not with his heart, by doing without relish or affection for God that which God commands, is either a Jew dreading the severity of punishment, or a philosopher foolishly ambitious of human applause.

III. The *extent* of Divine love may be estimated by considering the unity of that God who commands us to love him with our whole heart. There being but one God, to him we must dedicate all the love and affection of which we are capable ; and we may form some idea of this sovereign love thus enjoined us, by contrasting it with a heart either divided amongst various objects or cold and tepid in its love. The

unity of God cannot suffer a divided heart; it calls for the heart whole and entire; it does not allow us to divide our love between God and creatures, because whatever share we impart to created objects, of so much we defraud Almighty God. Yet there being persons whom God himself, by his law, requires us to love, this love, without dividing our hearts, must be referred only to that love which we bear to God, in the same manner as a small rivulet, which branches off from a large river, hastens, after a long circuit, to rejoin the waters from which it had separated, and even adds thereto those small streams which it may have collected in its course. The measure of the love of God is estimated by the infinite perfections of God, and especially by his goodness; and it requires that we love him *without measure*. This infinite goodness calls for our whole heart, and this without reserve. It requires that we employ ourselves entirely in the love of God, by dedicating to that love our whole being, the powers of our soul, the senses of our body, our thoughts, words, and actions.

To this greatest of all commandments Jesus added a second. "And the second," said he, "is like to this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He styles this commandment like to the first, both in the thing commanded, which is love, and in its extent, since this comprises all the precepts of the second table, as the former commandment comprised all the precepts of the first. To these two commandments he gives a decided preference over all others. "There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets," because all the injunctions of the law and the prophets are here virtually included. "And the Scribe," repeating and highly approving the answer of Jesus, "said to him: Well, Master, thou hast said in truth, that there is one God, and there is no other besides him. And that he is to be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole mind, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength, and

that to love one's neighbour as one's self is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus seeing that he had answered him wisely," and was now open to conviction, though at first indisposed against him, "said to him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But he had not it seems as yet attained to it, because he knew not him who, by his sufferings, was to merit for us the infusion of this love; and he falsely imagined that the giving this preference to God before ourselves and all created objects, was a thing possible to human nature in its present state of corruption, unassisted by the grace of God. "And no man after that durst ask him any question."

CHAPTER CXV.

CHRIST PROPOSES TO THE PHARISEES A DIFFICULT QUESTION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH. MATT. XXII. 41—46. MARK XII. 35—37. LUKE XX. 39—44.

"AND the Pharisees being" yet "gathered together, Jesus asked them" a question concerning the Messiah—a question which was the most proper to remove from their minds the bad impression they had conceived at his styling himself the true Son of God, as if this were a blasphemous contradiction of the unity of God, and incompatible with the mean condition of man. Jesus shows, under the authority of the Scriptures, that the Messiah was not merely a man, but also the real Son of God, and thus he took away the pretext they might otherwise have had to oppose his claim to that sublime title. Wherefore Jesus, after the many questions which had been put to him, thus interrogated the Pharisees in his turn, "saying: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him: David's." For it was the general belief of all the Jews that the Messiah would be a lineal descendant of David; that he would gather together the

Jews dispersed throughout the world ; that he would restore to them their former liberty ; restore the kingdom of David his father, then under the power of the Romans, and extend it, by the conquest of all nations, throughout the whole world.

In opposition to this reply of the Pharisees, “ Jesus answering, said, teaching in the temple : How do ye Scribes say, that Christ is the Son of David ? For David himself,” taught “ by the Holy Ghost, doth in spirit call him Lord, saying,” in the book of Psalms (Ps. cix. i) : “ *The Lord said to my Lord,*” that is, God said to the Messiah : “ *sit thou on my right hand, till I make thy enemies my footstool.*” Now a father styles not his son his lord. “ If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son ? ” This objection on the part of Jesus totally disconcerted them ; “ and no man was able to answer him a word : neither durst any man from that day ask him any more questions : and a great multitude heard him gladly,” and were charmed with his discourses.

The solution of the above difficulty, proposed by our Lord, consisted in giving two natures to the Messiah, viz. the nature of man, according to which David was his father, and the nature of God, according to which he was the Son of God and the Lord of David. Under this quality he had a just claim to sit at the right hand of God, that is, to possess the same glory, majesty, and sovereignty with God himself, being one and the same God with his eternal Father.

CHAPTER CXVI.

CHRIST EXHORTS THE JEWS TO OBSERVE THE DOCTRINE, BUT NOT TO FOLLOW THE EVIL EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. MATT. XXIII. 1—12. MARK XII. 38—40. LUKE XX. 45—47.

HAVING thus, in various instances, exhibited proofs of his Divine wisdom, Jesus proceeded to lay down rules to the

people by which they were to regulate their esteem for the Scribes and Pharisees ; at the same time, pointing out the various degrees of honour and respect to be shown to his own ministers. Lest the good opinion entertained by the people in favour of the Pharisees should induce them to imitate their vices, and so involve them in the same damnation, Jesus restrains their authority within its just limits, by directing his hearers to consider in them two distinct personages or characters, viz. that of superiors or teachers, and that of private individuals. “ Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying to them, in his doctrine : The Scribes and Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses,” and have succeeded to his authority of governing the people of God, and instructing them in his law. In this light, respect and obedience are due to their lawful authority, because Moses, or rather God himself, speaks through their mouths. “ All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you,” if not expressly contrary to the law of God, “ observe and do. But ” with regard to their private capacity as individuals, the case is widely different, and therefore, “ according to their works do ye not.” This advice is the more necessary, as mankind are more inclined to follow the example of their teachers than to practise what they prescribe ; and hence, whatever the people see done by their superiors, they are apt to consider it as allowable in themselves.

Jesus gives various reasons why they should not imitate the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. “ For they say and do not,” says he, “ for they bind heavy and insupportable burthens, and lay them on men’s shoulders : but with a finger of their own they will not move them ; ” that is, to the precepts and ceremonies of the law they add a load of human traditions, which, by their multiplicity, their inevitable perplexity, the exaggerated interpretations given to them, and their enforced severity, become insupportable to others, whilst they dispense with themselves from paying the least

regard to them. "And all their works they do to be seen by men," such as alms'-deeds, fasting, prayer, payment of tithes, &c. "Beware of the Scribes who love to walk in long robes; for they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes." These phylacteries were bands or scrolls of parchment, on which were written some sentences of the law, which the Jews were accustomed to fasten on their foreheads or their arms, to put them in mind of their duty. Thus they interpreted those words of Deut. vi. 8: *Thou shalt tie them as a sign on thy hand*, &c. The use of these phylacteries does not seem to have been general amongst the Jews, but was principally confined to those who made professions of greater piety and devotion. Our Saviour here blames the hypocrisy and vanity of the Scribes and Pharisees, who affected to have them larger than others, as well as the fringes which the Jews wore on their garments. Jesus added: "They love salutations in the market-place, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, and to be called by men Rabbi," or master: "who devour the houses of widows, under the pretence of long prayers" for their deceased husbands. Jesus adds, in reference to the Pharisees, that "they shall receive greater damnation" for thus abusing so holy a thing as prayer, merely to serve the purposes of their avarice. And then cautioning his disciples against affecting titles and honourable distinctions, he says: "But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your master, and all you are brethren. And call none your Father upon earth, for one is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, Christ." However, as subordination is equally necessary in the Church as in every other well-regulated community, Jesus, after supposing this, directs that he who is in the highest station shall yet consider himself as the servant of the rest: "he that is the greatest amongst you," says he, "shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled," either in this life by his fellow-creatures, or in the world to come,

by the just judgment of the Almighty: "and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

CHAPTER CXVII.

CHRIST VALUES THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES ABOVE ALL THE GIFTS OF THE RICH. MARK XII. 41—44. LUKE XXI. 1—4.

AFTER these various disputes and discourses with the Pharisees and others, "Jesus" reposed himself a little by "sitting" down "over against the treasury," which was in a hall near to the gate on the eastern side of the temple, at the place where the two sexes took different roads to go to their respective courts, which were separately allotted to them. As it was his usual practice to draw subjects of instruction from all, even the most minute circumstances, "he beheld" attentively "how the people cast money" and "gifts into the treasury" for the support of the temple. "And many that were rich cast in much: and he saw also a certain poor widow casting in two brass mites, which is a farthing" of Roman money; being the fruit either of her manual labour, or perhaps of her begging, but which she freely gave on this occasion, not to appear before God empty-handed. "And calling his disciples together, he saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she out of her poverty hath put in all she had, even her whole living," without reserving anything for her future subsistence. And therefore, whether the gift itself be considered, the circumstances of the giver, or the disposition of her heart, she may justly be declared to have performed a more meritorious action than others who gave alms to a much greater amount. What a comfort is it to the poor that they can be more charitable than the rich!

CHAPTER CXVIII.

THE THIRD PREDICTION OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. MATT. XXIV. 1—22. MARK XIII. 1—20. LUKE XXI. 5—24.

It was now late, when “Jesus, being come out of the temple, was going away” to Mount Olivet, where he passed the night. And “his disciples came to show him the buildings of the temple: and some saying of the temple, that it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, one of the disciples saith to him: Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here.” And in reality, according to the historian Josephus, the stones of which the temple was built were equal in whiteness and hardness to alabaster, and were of the immense dimension of twenty cubits long by twelve in breadth, and eight in depth: some of them were even of the length of forty-five cubits. As to its treasures, the spoils taken from the enemies of the Jewish nation, during many ages, added very greatly to the immense riches which were lodged there from its first foundation. It seemed as if the disciples wished on this occasion to divert their Master’s attention from the many serious subjects in which he had, during the whole day, been engaged. Jesus seized this opportunity to confirm, in yet stronger terms, the prediction which he had uttered on the day of his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and “answering, said to them: Do you see all these things? all these great buildings? Amen I say to you: the days will come in which there shall not be left here a stone upon a stone, that shall not be destroyed.” This was exactly verified at the taking of Jerusalem, when, contrary to the orders of Titus, the temple was burnt and reduced to ashes; and afterwards, in order to destroy the small remaining vestiges of it, when Julian the apostate attempted to rebuild the temple, in despite of Christianity, the very foundations were torn up, and cast out by an earth-

quake, and the workmen burnt to death by flames which issued from the bowels of the earth. "And when he was sitting on Mount Olivet, over against the temple, the " four "disciples," whom he distinguished by more particular marks of affection, "viz. Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, came to him privately, and asked him apart, saying: Master, tell us when these things shall happen: and what shall be the sign when all these things shall begin to be fulfilled? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the world?"

We must carefully observe, with St. Jerome, that three questions are here joined together, though very distinct from each other. 1. Concerning the destruction of the temple. 2. By what *sign* they might know that the evils here denounced against the temple, the city, and the whole nation, were near at hand. 3. What sign would precede his *second coming* at the end of the world? Jesus answers not precisely to the first question of his disciples; but contents himself with stating, in answer to the other questions, the general signs which were to precede the destruction of the city and temple, as also the desolation of the Church by Antichrist at the end of the world. To the last of these questions he gives a more precise and direct answer, as being the principal, and indeed the only question in which the Church was essentially concerned. Yet as the destruction of the temple was a figure of the desolation of the Church, which is the true temple in which God is served, it so happens that the signs preceding both these events coincide in a great measure with each other; or rather, that these signs, however distinct in themselves, are explained in the same terms, differing only in the two following particulars: 1. These expressions do not always so well apply to the signs of the figure (that is, to the destruction of the temple), as they do to the signs of the event represented thereby (viz. the desolation of the Church towards the end of the world). 2. These doubtful or equivocal expressions

are only continued to a certain point, after which the signs are so clearly and pointedly determined to the principal event thus prefigured, viz. to the desolation of the Church, as to require even a forced interpretation to apply them to the desolation of the temple. In this prophecy therefore we are to distinguish : 1. The signs which are applicable to the ruin of Jerusalem and of the temple, as well as to the desolation of the Church at the end of the world ; and 2. The signs which refer solely to the desolation of the Church at the latter period.

The first sign common to both these events is the seduction of many souls from the true faith by heresies. “ And Jesus answering, said to them : Take heed that no man seduce you : for many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ ” (or at least a minister of Christ to teach his doctrine), whilst in fact they maintain a variety of errors condemned by the Church, “ and they will seduce many, and the time is at hand : go ye not therefore after them.” If this be referred to the first desolation antecedent to the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple, various impostors might here be enumerated who deceived the unbelieving Jews. Of this description was Theodas (Acts v. 36) ; also a certain Egyptian, who persuaded four thousand men to break into open rebellion (Acts xxi. 38) ; besides several others recorded by Josephus, though not expressly named by him. But as these impostors did not deceive any of the faithful, the prediction which Christ here makes in regard to the Church seems rather to allude to other impostors, such as Simon Magus, Menander, &c., who engaged several Christians on that side. To these we may add the heresiarchs of the sixteenth century, who, by spreading their erroneous tenets, seduced many, and thus paved the way for that great apostasy which will take place at the end of the world.

The second sign common to both these events shall be wars, rumours of wars, and seditions : “ and when you shall hear of wars and seditions,” says Christ, “ and rumours of

wars, see that ye be not troubled. Fear ye not ; for such things must needs be. These things must first come to pass ; but the end is not yet presently." In reality, previous to the siege of Jerusalem, from the year 66 to 70, when the city was taken and pillaged, Judea exhibited a constant scene of revolt, sedition, and bloodshed, a particular detail of which may be seen in the history of Josephus. But as the theatre of war was only in one individual nation and country, one city fighting against another, or, at most, one province against another province, the remainder of this prediction is not so applicable to that period as it is to those wars which are declared to be the forerunners of the end of the world, when whole nations and kingdoms will rise up against each other. "Then said he to them : Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and pestilences, and famines, and terrors from heaven, and there shall be great signs." This is the third sign, consisting in many extraordinary revolutions of nature, astonishing earthquakes, plagues, famines, and likewise most alarming appearances and prodigies in the heavens. These prognostics we may apply in part to the ruin of Jerusalem. However, they more immediately relate to the end of the world, which will unquestionably be preceded by the scourges of pestilence and famine (the usual attendants of war), as also by earthquakes, many of which are described in the Apocalypse. The Almighty, after having punished mankind by the mutual cruelties which they will inflict upon each other in the most bloody wars, will subsequently strike them with the severe scourges of his vengeance, which shall be to all the world as certain prognostics of its approaching dissolution. "Now all these things," says Christ, "are" but "the beginnings of" more dreadful "sorrows."

The *fourth sign* common to both these events shall be the persecution raised against the Church, and this being the cause of the preceding signs, must in the nature of things

go before them. This persecution will be two-fold ; it will regard both body and soul. " But before all these things," says Christ, " they will lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons : but look to yourselves ; for they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten, and you shall stand before governors and kings for my name's sake. And it shall happen unto you for a testimony " against your persecutors, viz. that salvation and the doctrines leading to it have been tendered to them, and obstinately rejected. All this happened to the Apostles previous to the siege of Jerusalem, as well as to the martyrs in subsequent times ; and a similar persecution, attended perhaps with additional severity, will probably be the lot of the faithful towards the end of the world.

Jesus next arms his disciples against all dread of their enemies. " Lay it up therefore," says he, " in your hearts, when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, not to meditate before how you shall answer. But whatsoever shall be given to you in that hour " from above, " that speak ye. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost. And the brother shall betray his brother unto death, and the father his son ; and children shall rise up against the parents, and shall work their death. And you shall be betrayed, to be afflicted by your parents and brethren, and kinsmen and friends : and some of you they shall put to death : and you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake. But a hair of your head shall not perish," as it shall be amply restored to you at the last and general resurrection. " And then shall many be scandalised, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall seduce many ; and because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of men shall grow cold," when a door will be opened to all wickedness, so that like a deluge it shall spread

on every side. "But he that," in the midst of this trying and afflicting scene, shall bear up against the scandals which surround him, against the errors which he sees spread far and near, and against the persecutions which rage on all sides, and "shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved," and shall be crowned with glory. But in the mean time, "in your patience you shall possess your souls." A part of this prediction was undoubtedly accomplished with regard to the faithful in the first persecutions, raised by the Jews against the infant Christian Church; but the entire and literal completion of it is reserved for the latter times.

"And," as a *fifth* sign, "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations," that God has communicated the doctrine of salvation to them with a free offer of his heavenly kingdom; "and then shall the consummation come." But it may be asked, what consummation or end is here meant? If, with St. Chrysostom, we understand it of the final destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, it will in reality be found, that previous to that event, which happened in the seventeenth year of the Christian era, the Apostles had announced the Gospel throughout the world, as St. Paul writes (Rom. x.): *But I say: Have they (the Jews) not heard? Yes verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the whole world.* He also witnesses (Coloss. i. 6) that *the Gospel is in the whole world*; and (ver. 23) *the Gospel which you have heard, which is preached in all the creation that is under heaven.* However, although, to justify these expressions, it suffices that the Gospel had been announced throughout the major part of the known world, yet it appears not to have been so spread at that period, as to justify its being said, in the strict sense and utmost latitude of the words, that the whole extent of the universe had then partaken of this signal favour. If, on the contrary, with St. Jerome, we refer these words to the end of the world, we see, in these our later times, the light of the

Gospel conveyed to America, a portion of the globe which the Apostles did not visit. There is moreover the greatest probability that, before the end of the world, the southern parts of the globe, and all those nations in general which are now in the darkness of infidelity, will be enlightened with the true faith, or, at least, that previous to that period the true faith will have been announced to them.

Jesus next proceeds to the siege of Jerusalem, as an infallible prognostic of its approaching desolation. "And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet (chap. ix. 27), standing where it ought not," that is, in the holy place, "he that readeth let him understand." The abomination here alluded to most probably means the horrible profanation of the temple caused by the false zealots, who were divided into three factions against each other, and by whom even the two sanctuaries were most shockingly polluted. Others expound this of the standards of the heathen Roman army, on which were impressed the images of certain emperors who had been ranked in the number of the gods, and which were adored by the soldiers. Titus caused these standards to be elevated on high in his camp, to oppose them as a kind of temple to that of Jerusalem; and after he had entered the city, they were placed on the ruins of the temple, and the soldiers offered sacrifice to them, as mentioned by Josephus. But with regard to the end of the world, we may explain this abomination (which is followed by desolation) of that great apostasy foretold by St. Paul, who, viewing it with respect to the apostatising Christians, styles it a *revolt* (2 Thess. ii. 3), and, with respect to God, a *cutting off*, as being a just punishment upon those Gentiles who shall not have continued steadfast in a state of grace and virtue, so as to answer the expectations of the Almighty, by whom they have been so highly favoured (Rom. xi. 22.)

In consequence of this abomination of desolation, and the dreadful persecution which follows it, Jesus advises the faithful to seek their safety by flight. "Then let those who are in Judea, flee to the mountains : and those who are in the midst thereof, depart out : and those who are in the countries, not enter into it. And let him that is on the house-top not come down into the house : neither let him go in, to take any thing out of the house. And let him that shall be in the field not turn back to take up his garment. Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32), who, in punishment of her looking back at Sodom, not without some regret at its destruction, was instantly changed into a pillar of salt. "Whosoever" (v. 33), by worldly precautions, "shall seek to save his life, shall lose it," by falling into the hands of his enemies : "and whosoever shall lose it," by forsaking all the conveniences of life, "shall preserve it," because Divine Providence will extend his all-wise care and protection over him. "But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. But wo to them that are with child and give suck in those days ; for in those days shall be such tribulations as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, neither shall be. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captives into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations shall be fulfilled. And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh should be saved : but for the sake of the elect which he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days : " that is, unless these days of vengeance on the Jews, which will begin at the siege of Jerusalem, and continue with more or less violence till the second coming of the Son of man, had been shortened in their favour, not one of this people would have been saved (literally *all flesh*, that is, the last remains of this people

would have been exterminated): but for the sake of the elect whom he hath chosen from the remnant of this people, these days will be shortened.

CHAPTER CXIX.

JESUS CHRIST FORETELLS THE SIGNS AND EVENTS PREVIOUS TO HIS LAST COMING. MATT. XXIV. 23—41. MARK XIII. 21—32. LUKE XVII. 22—37; XXI. 25—35.

AFTER having thus described the desolation of the Church, Jesus proceeds to speak more directly of Antichrist and of the end of the world. Foretelling the coming of Antichrist, he warns the Christians of the latter ages to be upon their guard against seduction. "Then if any man shall say to you: lo here is Christ, or there: do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Take ye heed, therefore, behold I have foretold you all things. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert, go ye not out: behold he is in inner rooms, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," for he will immediately appear in all his glory, and will destroy the wicked as a thunderbolt which follows the flash of lightning almost instantaneously. "Wheresoever the body" of Christ "shall be," that adorable victim, immolated for the salvation of mankind, "there also shall the" elect as spiritual "eagles," accustomed to feed on his sacred flesh, "be gathered together" with incredible swiftness. To this St. Paul seems to allude where he says: 'We shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord' (1 Thess. iv. 16). "And immediately after the tribulation of those days, there shall be signs in the sun,

and in the moon, and in the stars : the sun shall be darkened, and the moon," of course, "shall not give her light, and the stars shall" apparently "fall from heaven," because their light shall be extinguished ; "and the powers of heaven shall be moved," and shaken to their very foundations. "And upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves ; men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," that is, the cross shining brighter than the sun : "and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn ; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet and a great voice : and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the furthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads : because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude," pointing out, in general terms, the time of his last coming. "See the fig-tree, when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves are come forth ; and the same as to all the" other "trees, when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye, that it is very nigh, even at the doors," and "that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, that this generation" of the faithful "shall not pass until all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." We must consider this promise as a solemn and explicit assurance given to his Church, that, in spite of all the heresies and persecutions foretold above, it shall infallibly continue until the end of the world, and even that the heavens and the earth will sooner pass away than this his Church shall fail. "But of that day or hour," says Christ, "no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." As a

check to the fruitless curiosity of those who wish to know the precise day and hour of the last coming of Jesus Christ (the signs of which are given above in general terms), he here declares this secret to be unknown, not only to all mankind and to the angels in heaven, but even to the Son of man himself, considered merely as to his human nature. It is, however, certain that Jesus Christ, even as man, knew the day of judgment and all things to come, by a knowledge inseparable from the union of his human nature with the Divine person: and to attribute any ignorance to Christ would be the error of the *Agnoetai*. The holy fathers, in answer to the Arians, who objected to this passage, reply, that Christ here speaks to his disciples only as he was the ambassador of his Father, and so he is said only to know what he is to make known to men. He is said not to know, says St. Augustin, what he will not make known to others.

Jesus proceeds to describe the extreme surprise and astonishment of mankind at his last coming, which he explains by two apposite figures drawn from the Old Testament. "And as" *it was* "in the days of Noe," says he, "so shall also the" second "coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark; and they knew not till the flood came, and took them all away. So also shall the coming of the Son of man be. Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot: they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed; he will come to judge the world when least expected, and will render to every one according to his works. "I say to you: in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken" for heaven, "and the other left" for hell. "Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken" in

like manner, “and the other shall be left: two men shall be in the field, the one shall” also “be taken, and the other shall be left. They answering, say to him: Where, Lord,” shall these things come to pass? “Who said to them: Wheresoever the body” of the Son of man “shall be,” thither will “men” as quick “as eagles be gathered together” at the resurrection, to hear from his mouth the judgment he will pronounce, and to receive at his hands either the recompense or the punishment which they shall have merited by their works.

CHAPTER CXX.

MEDITATION, WATCHFULNESS, AND PRAYER RECOMMENDED.

MARK XIII. 33—37. LUKE XXI. 34—36.

FROM the uncertainty and ignorance of the time when these great events are to take place, Jesus draws three consequences of extreme importance to all succeeding Christians, but more especially to those of the latter ages of the world.

The first is, constantly to meditate upon these serious truths. The second, to be ever watchful over ourselves, lest our hearts become attached to the empty toys of this world, the paltry pleasures of the table, or be oppressed by the cares and solitudes of this life. Thirdly, he exhorts us to join to this watchfulness a constancy in prayer. “Take heed,” says he, “watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand” with confidence “before the Son of man.” He particularly insists on watchfulness, and says

that he shall act in our regard, "even as a man who, going into a far country, left his house and gave authority to his servants over every work, and commanded the porter to watch" faithfully until his return, that so by his authority he might prevent the other servants from being idle, the slaves and bondsmen from running away, strangers from being admitted to interrupt their work; and lastly, that he might prevent all robbers and thieves from breaking into his premises.

The man who is here represented as taking a distant journey is Jesus Christ, who has ascended into heaven. His house is the Church, in which there are various offices and employments: these he has distributed amongst his servants, constituting some as bishops, others as pastors and preachers of his holy word, with that regular subordination and authority which are necessary for the duly performing of the various functions of the ministry. This distribution is general, and there is not an individual member of the house of God, however mean and contemptible, to whom Jesus Christ has not intrusted some office in relation to his brethren, though it extend no further than the obligation of giving them edification by a holy life. It is highly probable that the porter here represented as holding the keys of the house is no other than the successor of St. Peter, who is established over the other officers or bishops, purposely to take care that none of them neglect their respective duties, and that nothing either go out or come into the house which may tend to corrupt those who are the members of Christ's family. From this comparison Jesus infers the necessity of watchfulness. "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even or at midnight, or at cock crowing" (about three or four o'clock), "or in the morning" at sun-rise: "lest when he comes on a sudden, he finds you sleeping," that is, neglecting your duties, indulging habits of idleness, or oppressed with the cares and solitudes of this world. "And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch."

If it be asked, why Jesus Christ here requires of all a constant watchfulness, since it seems to regard such only as shall live in times immediately preceding his last coming, and not others who, having long before ended their mortal course, shall no longer be within the possibility of being surprised by him? St. Austin, in his eightieth letter, makes answer, that to each individual Christian the day of his death is the day of Christ's second coming, and that in whatever state a person shall be found at his departure out of this world, in that he shall be judged at the last day, because, when once separated from the body, the soul continues in the same state without alteration. Whence it matters little whether our soul be judged at the first leaving the body or at the distance of many centuries, since her lot will depend solely on the state in which she is found at the precise moment of her leaving this world. This consideration should oblige every Christian to be always watchful over himself, and to keep his conscience pure, lest he be surprised unawares by the coming of Jesus Christ, since, from the uncertain tenure of human life, it must be a profound secret whether his master will return in the evening, at midnight, at the cock crowing, or at sunrise; or, in other words, whether death will surprise him in old age, in manhood, or in youth; in any of which a surprise must be equally fatal, and attended with endless misery.

CHAPTER CXXI.

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS. MATT. xxv. 1—13.

“**THEN** shall the kingdom of God,” said Christ, “be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish and five wise. But the five foolish having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. And the bridegroom making delay,

they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight an outcry was made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering, said: Amen I say to you, I know you not."

In this parable, under the figure of virgins, are represented all the faithful during their mortal pilgrimage. Their souls are virgins with respect to the Catholic faith, which is pure and exempt from all corruption of error: they are appointed to go forth with their lamps to meet the bridegroom, because their business is to walk by the light of faith, and to be always ready for the coming of Christ their heavenly bridegroom. The lamps with which they are furnished are to be kept burning with the oil of such good works as the Gospel recommends. Where this oil is wanting, the lamps are extinguished, because *faith without good works is dead*. The unwise or the foolish souls are such as content themselves with an outward profession of the faith, and with a certain exterior show of decency in their morals, without giving themselves any concern about the love of God and the practice of solid piety. Whilst persons of this description are satisfied with an apparent piety, and with the performance of such works as serve only to gain the empty applause of mankind, wise souls, on the contrary, not content with a fair outside which may please the eyes of men, are ever careful to treasure up a store of good works, such as are truly acceptable to God, and meritorious of eternal life.

The delay of the bridegroom represents the time of this life, and even the whole course of succeeding ages to the

day of judgment, when Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, will return. During this interval the virgins not only slumber, but also give themselves entirely up to sleep. The slumber which precedes the sleep of the expecting virgins represents those sicknesses which precede death, and their sleep is death itself, from which they will be awakened at the general resurrection of mankind. The sleep, therefore, here described is not to be understood of a blamable drowsiness contrasted with the watchfulness which our Lord recommends in the close of this parable, because even the wise virgins slumber and sleep equally with the unwise, nor are they censured for so doing.

At midnight a sudden and great cry awakens these virgins, who are summoned to go forth and to meet the bridegroom. This denotes the sound of the last trumpet, which will summon the dead to arise from the sleep of death, and to appear before Jesus Christ. Thus the resurrection of the body is represented by the awakening of the virgins, and the wise as well as the unwise prepare their lamps, that is, they pass over in review the several actions of their respective lives, of which they are instantly to give a strict account to the sovereign Judge. But the foolish souls, sensible that the faint light of human applause, which in this life added a lustre to their actions, is now going to be extinguished in the great day of God's justice, and that the false glitter of an apparent virtue cannot stand the test of the judgment of truth, would willingly obtain by any means a supply of oil from the other more wise souls, that is, a portion of their meritorious good works, upon the principle of the communion of saints, which is the foundation upon which the Catholic doctrine of indulgences is established. But the time for obtaining such indulgences is now past; and repentance and sorrow come too late, and nothing is to be expected but a strict and just retribution to each one according to his works. These foolish virgins, therefore, who have neglected to provide themselves in time with the oil of good works, will

have no resource left, but will condemn their extreme folly in not having made the necessary preparations for so important an emergency. The bridegroom comes, and takes along with him to his wedding feast such only as he finds ready; and against the rest the door is shut, never, never to be opened. The conclusion is obvious, that it extremely behoves us all to be watchful and earnest in the practice of good works, and not to postpone them to distant times which are not in our power; because nothing is so uncertain as the hour of death, which in our regard is the time of Christ's coming to decide our eternal lot. "*Watch ye therefore,*" says Christ, "*because you know not the day nor the hour.*"

CHAPTER CXXII.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN TALENTS. MATT. XXV. 14—30.

THE design of this parable is to show the necessity we lie under of labouring in good earnest, each one according to his talent and employment. "A man," says our Lord, "being about to take a journey into a foreign country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one; to every one according to his respective capacity, and immediately he took his journey." The man here spoken of represents Jesus Christ our Lord, who, by his ascension is gone to heaven. But, *ascending on high, he gave gifts to men*; for he has plentifully distributed his goods and talents among his servants, to the end that they may trade with them, and improve the stock during the time of his absence, till he shall come again and take an account of their good or evil management of their trust. All that we have either as to soul or body, nature or grace, is derived from him, and deposited in our hands as a kind of talents for which we are, one day, to be accountable.

We are next to consider the different use which these

servants made of their master's money. For "he that received the five talents, went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that received two, gained other two. But he that received the one, going his way dug into the earth, and hid his Lord's money. But after a long time the Lord of these servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents: behold I have gained other five over and above. His Lord said to him: Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And he also that had received the two talents came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me: behold I have gained other two. The Lord said to him: Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. But he that had received the one talent came and said: Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and thou gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth: behold here thou hast that which is thine. And his Lord answering, said to him: Wicked and slothful servant, thou didst know that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest therefore to have committed the money to the bankers, and, at my return, I should have received my own with usury. Take ye therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound: but from him that hath not," what he ought to have, "that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness" of hell. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The condemnation and punishment of this slothful servant is a striking warning to all those Christians who, having received talents, that is, gifts, graces, or advantages of any kind, from God, do not employ them to his greater honour and glory, and to their own and their neighbour's improvement, but through sloth and indolence let them lie unregarded, and, as it were, hidden and buried in the earth, even in this unhappy earth of the world and the flesh, which engage all their thoughts and their affections more than the honour and glory of their Lord, or the eternal welfare of their own souls.

CHAPTER CXXIII.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LAST JUDGMENT. MATT. XXV.

31—46.

THE foregoing parables manifestly tend to excite in us the most earnest watchfulness, under the just apprehension of the strict account which hereafter we must give of our respective talents. Jesus, therefore, naturally concluded these parables by a description of that tremendous day which succeeds the final reckoning, and which will unalterably fix our abode either in eternal happiness or in eternal misery. In this description we are to remark: 1. The preparations for this awful scene. 2. The sentence pronounced by the Judge. 3. The execution of this sentence.

“And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all his angels with him,” as the ministers of his justice, “then shall he sit upon” a bright cloud as “the seat of his majesty; and all nations,” by the ministry of angels, “shall be gathered together before him,” as the sovereign Ruler and Judge of all mankind. This scene will probably take place near Jerusalem, in the valley of Josaphat (Joel iii. 2), which adjoins to Mount Olivet, where Jesus began to suffer,

and whence he ascended glorious into heaven. Hence the two angels who, on that occasion, appeared to the Apostles, assured them that he would come again from heaven, in the same manner as they had seen him at his ascension. On that final day the Judge “shall separate them one from another,” that is, the elect from the reprobate, in the same manner “as the shepherd,” in the evening, “separates the sheep from the goats,” which during the day have ranged in the same pastures. “And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left;” that is, he will cause the just to be taken up into the clouds to meet him, as described by St. Paul (1 Thess. iv. 16), and leave the reprobate upon the earth to receive their eternal doom. We are therefore to consider the terms of *the right hand* and of *the left*, as metaphors; the former of which is designed to give us the idea of a distinguished rank, the latter that of a place of malediction. The reprobate are described under the character of goats—a wanton, unclean, and impetuous animal; the elect under that of sheep, on account of their patience, their mildness, their simplicity, and their innocence. “Then shall the King,” seated on his throne, “say to them that shall be on his right hand,” with a serene countenance: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you,” as your inheritance, “from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.” In assigning the reason why the elect are put in possession of this eternal kingdom, Jesus mentions only one species of good works, viz. the works of mercy, though others may be equally meritorious: for the means of salvation are not precisely the same for all the saints: some are saved by poverty, others by solitude, and each by that virtue which he shall have practised in the greatest degree of perfection. This description of the last

judgment seems therefore particularly to be addressed to Christians engaged in the cares of the world, whose salvation principally depends on the practice of the works of mercy. "Then shall the just answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee? thirsty, and gave thee drink? and when did we see thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and covered thee? or when did we see thee sick or in prison, and came to thee? And the King answering, shall say to them: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren," your fellow Christians, "you did it to me." The question here proposed by the elect to their Judge, and his reply, are thus painted in words adapted to their ideas, and are meant only to describe the thoughts of profound admiration and astonishment which will fill the elect on account of this goodness of Jesus, in vouchsafing to consider whatever they have done to the poor as done to himself. "Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand," with fire in his eyes, and terror in his countenance: "Depart from me, ye cursed," and hated of God, "into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." The fire of hell was not, properly speaking, enkindled for the punishment of the human race; man was created subsequently to the fall and to the damnation of the rebel angels; and though he imitated their prevarication, yet by the blood of Jesus he has been redeemed from eternal punishment. If many, notwithstanding, are yet condemned to never-ending flames, they are punished under the quality of slaves of the devil; for as they have wilfully followed his rebellious example, they must expect to share with him in his punishment. The reason assigned by the Judge for this dreadful sentence of damnation is, that they have neglected those works of mercy which they ought to have performed towards Jesus Christ, in the persons of his necessitous members. "For I was hungry," he will say to them, "and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink: I was a

stranger, and you took me not in : naked, and you covered me not : sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying : Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee ? ” Hence they will plead that this is a calumnious charge, and ought not to operate towards their condemnation. “ Then he shall answer them,” by a voice which shall speak to the inmost recesses of their consciences, “ saying : Amen, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it not to one of these least, neither have you done it to me.”

There will, doubtless, be an infinite number of other crimes not here noticed by Jesus, which will draw down upon sinners the terrible sentence of damnation. He here only alleges the neglect of one sort of good works, as an inducement to us to be zealous in the practice of them ; but at the same time he gives us sufficient grounds to argue with ourselves in the words of St. Austin. If a mere neglect of the works of mercy will occasion the damnation of numberless Christians, what will be the sentence pronounced against those who are guilty of so many positive flagrant crimes ? If they who have neglected to afford assistance to their distressed neighbour will most assuredly be condemned to the flames of hell, how can others expect to escape these flames who shall have committed against their neighbour the greatest outrages ? The sentence shall no sooner be pronounced than executed, “ and these ” wicked wretches “ shall go into everlasting punishment : but the just into life everlasting.” Yes, the reprobate shall be consigned to everlasting burnings ; the abyss of hell shall open under their feet, and they shall be precipitated into it, surrounded by those raging flames which shall have consumed the whole material world. Whilst, on the contrary, the elect shall follow Jesus Christ to everlasting glory, and with him shall enjoy for ever the kingdom of his Father.

On a recapitulation of this long discourse, we may observe that, in the first place, it treats of those wars and persecutions which are to happen in the latter ages of the world; that it then proceeds to describe the heresies and schisms among Christians; the general propagation of the Gospel; the great apostasy at the time of Antichrist; lastly, it concludes with the grand scene of the day of judgment. Thus these events are intimately connected with each other, and all materially regard the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER CXXIV.

THE SECOND COUNCIL HELD BY THE JEWS AGAINST JESUS.

MATT. XXVI. 2—5, 14—16. MARK XIV. 1, 2, 10, 11.

LUKE XXII. 1—6.

“Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was at hand, and it was to be after two days. And the chief priests and Scribes,” more and more irritated against Jesus by the parables which he had spoken on the preceding day, “sought how they might, by” some “artful contrivance, seize and put him to death. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished all these discourses, he said to his disciples: You know that after two days is to be the Passover, and,” during this solemnity, “the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the elders of the people into the court of the high priest who was called Caiphas: and they consulted together, that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, and put him to death. But they feared the people,” who considered him as a great prophet, “and they said: Not on a festival-day, lest perhaps a tumult should happen amongst the people.” But this was over-ruled, when Judas informed them how he could and would put him into their hands on Thursday night. Wherefore, at a time

highly favourable to their designs, "Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve" Apostles, and suggested to him the certain reward he might obtain of the sanhedrim by delivering up Jesus into their hands. With this view "Judas went to the chief priests that he might betray him to them. And he discoursed with" them "and the magistrates, how he might" effect this without any seditious disturbance among the people. "And he said to them : What will you give me, and I will deliver him up to you ? Who hearing it, were glad, and" willingly "promised to give him money. And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver," which is about three pounds fifteen shillings of our money, and which was the price of a slave, as appears from Exodus xxi. 32. This sum, though small, might be sufficient to buy the potter's field, as mentioned hereafter, because it is probable this field was in the most wretched condition, and the best of the soil had been taken out of it. Wherefore Judas "promised" to deliver up to them his Master for this trifling consideration. "And from that time he sought for an opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude." Judas was influenced to undertake this horrid treachery by a variety of motives, but chiefly by that of avarice. He judged it a favourable opportunity to indemnify himself for what he considered as a real and weighty loss, when the precious ointment was poured out upon Jesus at the feast of Bethania ; and to secure this indemnification, he scrupled not to contract for the life of him who had been the object of this pious profusion. As to the remorse of conscience which must necessarily have attended so foul an ingratitude, Judas most probably would endeavour to smother it by the reflection, that although he might betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies, he would yet be able to escape from them with ease, as he had witnessed upon former occasions at Nazareth and in the temple. Hence he was willing to believe that the blood of Jesus would not be laid to his charge, whilst,

at the same time, he might safely reap the profits of his treachery to both parties, viz. to Jesus, by shamefully betraying him, and to the Jews, by their obtaining possession of a person who, in all probability, would not fail to escape from them. Few look upon the sin of covetousness to be so great and dangerous as it really is, yet here we see it was the occasion of the greatest sin that ever was committed.

PART VI.

CONTAINING THE ACTIONS AND DISCOURSES OF
CHRIST, FROM THE FOURTH PASSOVER TO HIS
TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

CHAPTER CXXV.

THE PASCHAL SUPPER. MATT. XXVI. 17—25. MARK XIV.
12—21. LUKE XXII. 7—18.

THE ensuing Thursday was the fourteenth day of the Moon, the eve of the Passover, on which, according to the law, the paschal lamb was to be sacrificed, as is clear from the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. “And on the first day of the Azymes,” or of unleavened bread, “on which it was necessary that the Passover should be killed, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Whither wilt thou that we go and prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he sendeth Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat. But they said: Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said to them: Go ye into the city, and behold at your entering into” it “a man shall meet you carrying a pitcher of water: follow him to the house which he goeth into. And wherever he shall enter, say to the good man of the house: The Master saith to thee, my time is near at hand, with thee I make the Passover with my disciples: where is an eating-room, or guest-chamber, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished, and there prepare ye for us.” The Evangelists prudently suppress the name of the person, who was probably then living, lest he and his family might on that account be exposed to the fury of the Jews. “And his disciples went

their way, and came into the city, and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover, as Jesus appointed to them. And when the evening was come, he cometh with the twelve; and when the hour was come," viz. at sunset, "he placed himself at table, and the twelve with him. And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this" Jewish "Passover with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled" by the real Passover "in the kingdom of God." He here alludes to the master-piece of his power and of his love for mankind, viz. the institution of the adorable mystery of the holy Eucharist; and the meaning is, that this was the last Jewish Passover which he should eat with his disciples before he realised the figurative lamb for the true one, that is, himself, which he was about to substitute in its place. After the paschal lamb was eaten in due form, "Jesus having taken the chalice," according to the usual custom, "gave thanks" to his heavenly Father, because the time of shadows and figures was now passed away, and having tasted it, he gave it to his disciples, "and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come;" that is, this was the last time Christ would drink wine till the kingdom of God should appear by the miraculous change of wine into his own sacred blood, this being in reality one of the most astonishing instances of the power and control of the Almighty over the creation. In these words, therefore, is implied a promise of the holy Eucharist, which Jesus is now about to fulfil, after the previous ceremony of washing his Apostles' feet.

The Jewish Passover was the most solemn rite of the old law, appointed by God as a lasting monument of the deliverance of his people from the destroying angel, and the cruel slavery of Pharaoh (see *Exod. chap. xiv.*). The Israelites were directed to offer in sacrifice an unspotted lamb, and to sprinkle their door-posts with the blood of the victim, as a

sign for the exterminating angel to pass over their houses, while he slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive woman that was in prison. After this last plague, the stubborn heart of Pharaoh relented; dreading the total extermination of his people, he hastened the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt with all possible expedition. Amid the general desolation of that night (for there was not an Egyptian house without a dead body), the Israelites were preserved unhurt, owing to the blood of the paschal lamb. This was a great mystery, says St. Chrysostom, an admirable figure of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, who was to be offered up in sacrifice for our redemption from sin and hell, and with the sprinkling of whose blood our souls are rescued from the slavery of the infernal Pharaoh, and from the second and eternal death. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, says St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 7). When God ordered the Israelites to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon their door-posts, it was not from any need he had of this sensible mark to discover the victims of his wrath; it was solely with the view of signifying that the blood of the true Lamb would be the distinguishing character or mark to discriminate the children of Israel, whom he appointed to save, from the children of Egypt, who are devoted to destruction. Let us, therefore, with St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 10), bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, and the impression of his blood, if we would escape the Divine wrath and the infernal destroying angel that seeks our ruin. Every thing in the paschal lamb was mysterious and prophetic. A bone was not to be broken, and they brake not the legs of Jesus Christ on the cross (John xix. 33). The lamb was to be without blemish, to express the perfect sanctity of Jesus Christ, the immaculate Lamb of God. The paschal lamb was to be sacrificed and eaten, because Christ was to suffer and die for us; and unless we eat his flesh, we shall have no life in us. The door-posts of the Israelites were to be

sprinkled with blood, that the destroying angel might pass over them, for with the blood of Christ our souls are to be purified, that sin and death may not prevail against us. In every house was eaten a whole lamb; and Christ at communion is received whole and entire by every faithful soul. From the manner in which the paschal lamb was to be eaten, we may learn the dispositions of soul in which we ought to come to the Christian Passover. The lamb was roasted with fire, to express that fire of Divine charity with which we are to approach to Christ in the holy mysteries:—it was eaten with unleavened bread; therefore, says the Apostle (1 Cor. v. 8), “let us feast not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” The bitter herbs, prescribed for eating the paschal lamb, signify that wholesome bitterness of repentance and contrition for sin with which we are to come to the Lamb of God. The loins girt, and feet shod, denote the girding up of the loins of our soul, by resolutely restraining our passions and lusts, and that our feet, that is, the affections of the soul, are to be shod with the preparations of the gospel of peace (Eph. iv. 15), that is, with a readiness of heart to follow in all things the rules of the Gospel, as the only way to true peace. The staff in the hand shows that we are to reckon ourselves as pilgrims in this world, who have no lasting dwelling-place here, and that therefore we are to make the best of our way to our true country, the heavenly Canaan.

CHAPTER CXXVI.

JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS APOSTLES. JOHN XIII. 1—19.

OF the four Evangelists, St. John is the only one who relates the washing of the Apostles' feet, preparatory to the institution of the holy Eucharist. This was on the evening

“before the festival-day of the Passover,” when “Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end,” leaving them in the blessed sacrament which he was going to institute, and which breathes nothing but love, an eternal monument of his most tender affection. “And,” therefore, “when supper was done,” in which he ate the typic paschal lamb with his disciples (“the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him); knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God” again, with a full and absolute power to dispose of all things, he resolves upon the performance of that masterpiece of his power and goodness, the institution of the blessed Eucharist; and with the view of preparing his disciples for the worthily receiving of so august a sacrament, “he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his” upper “garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself,” after the manner of a servant. “After that, he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” In this transaction we may observe how Jesus enforces the necessity of the purification of our interior, and recommends, by his own example, the practice of charity and of humility to all his followers. The necessity of this purification appears from the tenour of his discourse with Peter “He cometh therefore,” first, “to Simon Peter, and Peter saith to him: Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not” the meaning of “now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter,” struck at such an humiliating condescension, “saith to him: Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.” It is thus that Jesus describes the communion of his body and blood, or the holy Eucharist; and the purport of his words is, that as Peter was not in that due state of preparation requisite for

worthily receiving this august sacrament, so, unless he submitted to the required purification, emblematically figured by the washing of his feet, he should be debarred from partaking of that sacred mystery. "Simon Peter," although he did not yet fully comprehend the meaning of what Jesus proposed to him, was, however, sensible that this washing of his feet was something mysterious, and therefore declares his full assent to it, and "saith to him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed" in a bath, "needeth not but to wash his feet" at coming out, "being clean all over:" it is the dust alone, unavoidably adhering to his feet by his touching the ground, which must be shaken off, or cleansed away; in other words, the soul, which is in the state of righteousness, however just she may be, yet stands in need of grace, as of a living water, to purify the heart and affections from that dust or dirt which is unavoidably contracted in our commerce with the world. Jesus then added: "And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean. Then, after he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, being set down again," he endeavoured to make them sensible of the advantage to be derived from this humble ceremony which he had just performed. The principal fruit to be gathered from it was an imitation of his humility, of which he gave them so striking an example; and "he said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you say well; for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." This is not to be understood as extending merely to the outward ceremony of washing the feet of our brethren; but is likewise complied with in a spiritual sense, when we pardon them the faults which they commit against us, and when, by our prayers, our advice, our fraternal corrections, and especially by the

example of a virtuous life, we contribute all in our power to cleanse the affections and meliorate the conduct of each other. He confirms the reason drawn from his own example in these terms: "Amen I say to you: the servant is not greater than his Lord: neither is the Apostle greater than he that sent him." Since therefore, in this instance, I your Lord and Master have so far humbled myself as to perform towards you, my servants and Apostles, an office of so mean and humble a nature as that of washing your feet, how can you, my disciples, with propriety refuse to perform a similar office to each other, or consider yourselves debased by so doing? He adds, by way of conclusion: "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them;" for the knowledge of virtue, without the practice, avails nothing. Then making an exception as to the traitor Judas, he said: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen" for eternal happiness: "but" I tolerate others of a different description, "that the Scriptures may be fulfilled: *he that eateth my bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me*" (Ps. xi. 10). Jesus had hitherto fulfilled that part of the prophecy which regarded his conduct towards Judas, in having given him his bread and maintenance; but he is now about to extend his bounty to him infinitely further, and *to heap coals upon his head*, by imparting to him his own sacred body for food, in company with the other Apostles. *He shall lift up his heel*; this being the most distant part of the body, represents the last stroke which Judas was then meditating to inflict upon him at parting, as a farewell blow, which was no less than to deliver him into the hands of his enemies. Jesus calls the attention of his disciples to this prediction: "At present," says he, "I tell you before it comes to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe that I am he," viz. the Son of God, and the eternal wisdom of the Father. He would hereby convince them that he was not taken by surprise, though at the moment they did not understand what he had expressed only in general terms.

As to the silence of St. John respecting the institution of the holy Eucharist, it may easily be accounted for, from the circumstance of its having been sufficiently recorded by the other Evangelists. Yet he gives us the recital of Christ's washing the feet of his Apostles, as a preparation for this divine sacrament: at least this is the most easy and rational construction we can give to the above ceremony, and to the several circumstances preceding it.

CHAPTER CXXVII.

CHRIST INSTITUTES THE HOLY EUCHARIST. MATT. XXVI. 26—
29. MARK XIV. 22—25. LUKE XXII. 19, 20.

AFTER eating the paschal lamb and washing his disciples' feet, Jesus proceeded to the institution of the holy Eucharist; and this he did, "whilst they were" yet "at supper," in order that the truth or reality might succeed to the figure in one and the same banquet. He chose, moreover, to conclude the last supper with this Divine sacrament, in order more deeply to impress upon the minds of his disciples the remembrance of so singular a favour. "Jesus," therefore, "took" into his sacred and venerable hands unleavened "bread," this only being at hand, and what the law prescribed to be eaten with the paschal lamb (Exod. xii.). "And" lifting up his eyes to heaven, "he gave thanks" (hence the holy sacrament is called the Eucharist), to his heavenly Father for the almighty power bestowed on him over all created things, so as to render them subservient to his greatest mysteries; "and," holding the bread in his hands, "he blessed it" by some particular form or gesture, to engage the attention of his disciples to what he was going to perform, "and he broke" it into thirteen pieces, for that was the number at table: or perhaps he might break off a portion or share, as he distributed it to each; which he

might the more easily do, as the unleavened bread was made in a flat shape ; “ and he gave to his disciples ” there present, not excepting even Judas, “ and said : Take ye and eat : ” for “ THIS IS MY BODY which is given for you ; ” that is, which will be offered up for you in sacrifice upon the cross, or which is now offered up and distributed to you. This second meaning is more conformable to the Greek text of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xi. 24. *To υπερ υμων κλωμενον*, quod pro vobis frangitur,) that which is now broken to be given to you. But the former sense agrees better with the vulgate (quod pro vobis tradetur), which shall be delivered for you. Jesus then empowered his disciples and their successors to perform the self-same thing which he had done, with a grateful sense and lively remembrance of his sufferings for them. “ Do this,” said he, “ for a commemoration of me ; ” that is, as often as, in imitation of me, you consecrate bread and wine into my body and blood, do it with a grateful remembrance of my passion and death. And this injunction extends to all ages, for as often, says the Apostle (1 Cor. xi. 26), as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come again to judge the world. Jesus, “ in like manner, taking the chalice, after he had supped,” proceeded to the consecration of the wine. St. Luke had omitted the circumstance of the time in the recital of the consecration of the bread, but he here states it to show that the eating of the paschal supper, according to the old law, was now terminated, and that in its stead he instituted the great sacrament and sacrifice of his body and blood. Jesus then “ gave thanks ” to his heavenly Father, and blessed the chalice, hereby indicating that the effect to be produced upon the wine was distinct from that which he wrought upon the bread. To show his union with all the members of his mystical body, Christ partook first of the consecrated cup, as he had done already of the consecrated Host : he then “ gave to them, saying : Drink ye all of this, for this is my

BLOOD," and the seal "of the New Testament" (or the New Testament in my blood) "which shall be shed for many to the remission of sins:" to which we must add these words recorded by St. Luke (Luke xxii. 20), which were unquestionably spoken by Jesus Christ: "This is the chalice, the New Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you" on the cross, as the ransom to be paid for the redemption of the world. In the Greek this is expressed by the present tense, and refers to the cup; so that the exact and literal translation would be, *which cup is shed for you*; hence it is proved that the blood of the New Testament was then really and truly in the chalice, and that the effusion of the chalice into the mouths of the Apostles was a real and perfect sacrifice. "And they all drank of it," not excepting even Judas. Jesus now declared to them, that as this was the first time of his drinking his blood with them, so likewise it would be the last time until after his resurrection. "And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforwards of this fruit of the vine" (meaning his own blood, he being the true vine, as he is about to inform them), "until that day when," being renewed by my resurrection, "I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father:" or perhaps he gives them to understand that the blessed Eucharist, which they had just received, was in the nature of a foretaste which would hereafter be followed by a new, glorious, and eternal banquet, prepared for them in the kingdom of heaven.

In confirmation of what has been noticed above respecting this great mystery of the Eucharist, we may observe how every circumstance relating to its institution manifestly tends to prove the real presence of Jesus Christ, and that his words are to be taken in their obvious and literal sense. —*The time of the institution*; it was that very night when Jesus, for the last time, addresses his Apostles, previous to his undergoing a cruel death. A time when all persons are disposed to speak in the most clear and unequivocal manner. —*The situation of Jesus Christ*; in respect to his Apostles

he is a tender father, who makes his last will and testament. This should ever be done in the plainest terms. Does a wise man recur, on such an occasion, to unusual figures of speech? Does he say, for instance, that he bequeathes a diamond, when he intends to bequeath only the figure or representation of a diamond?—The *quality* of Jesus Christ; he is a mediator between God and man, who is to form an eternal alliance. Such an alliance, we may well suppose, would be expressed in the clearest language. The very action itself which Jesus Christ performs; it is a most sacred and solemn rite, which is to last to the end of the world. The least ambiguity, therefore, would be attended with the most dangerous consequences.—Jesus Christ, the sovereign Pontiff, is perfectly holy; he has in abomination every species of false and idolatrous worship. Yet might he not be justly charged with having given occasion to it, if on this solemn occasion he had delivered himself in obscure, figurative terms, which he foresaw would be misunderstood by far the greatest part of the Christian world?—The *affection* of Jesus Christ, manifested on this occasion; he testifies the most ardent love for his children; he bestows on them the greatest of benefits; *having loved his own, he loved them to the end* (John xiii. 1). His *power* is not inferior to his love; *knowing that the Father hath given him all things into his hands* (ver. 3). To such Almighty power nothing can seem hard or impossible. But the very words of Jesus Christ, simple, clear, and perfectly adapted to the great action which he was performing, alone furnish the strongest proof imaginable, especially if their connection be considered with what he was going to do and suffer for mankind. *This is my body which shall be delivered for you*, and consequently my true and real body, about to be crucified, and not a figure of it. *This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many* on the cross. Admitting that Christ intended to give us his body and blood, could he have made use of words more clear and perspicuous than

these: *This is my body, this is my blood?* How then will those Christians dare to present themselves before the awful tribunal of Jesus Christ, who, with the unbelieving Capharnaïtes, refuse to give credit to his words? He positively declares: *This is my body*, and they boldly deny it, and maintain it to be only the figure and representation of it. A Catholic, on the contrary, may confidently say to his Judge, with simplicity: O Eternal Truth! I have believed what you declared by three Evangelists, and by St. Paul: *This is my body, this is my blood*. I have believed the words of Jesus Christ; I have believed the Church, the Spouse of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is truth itself; the Church is the *pillar of truth*. I am, therefore, perfectly satisfied and assured that my faith is right, and this faith I will boldly confess before the Sovereign Judge of the living and dead.

CHAPTER CXXVIII.

JESUS POINTS OUT THE TRAITOR JUDAS, WHO WITHDRAWS HIMSELF. MATT. XXVI. 21—25; MARK XIV. 18—21; LUKE XXII. 21—23; JOHN XIII. 20—32.

PREVIOUSLY to his changing the subject of his discourse, Jesus declared, that whosoever received an Apostle, did, by so doing, receive himself, and moreover, that whoever received him, as they had recently done in the holy communion, received at the same time his heavenly Father that sent him. “Amen, amen I say to you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me,” because my Father and I are one and the same thing.

He had hitherto spoken of the treason of Judas in terms which were not perfectly understood by any present, except perhaps by Judas himself. He now resumes the subject with the view of making an impression on the mind of that hardened wretch, were he susceptible of remorse, in order that

he might change his black design on finding himself discovered. Secondly, Jesus would remove from the minds of his other disciples all grounds of suspecting that he had been betrayed by Judas unawares, or that the fatal consequences following from that treason were involuntary and beyond his power to prevent. He therefore lays open the intended treason in clear and express terms, and at the same time points out, in secret only, the person of the concealed traitor.

“When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit,” considering both the crime which Judas was about to commit, and the cruel death which himself was going to suffer. “And he testified” his grief when they were at table and eating; “and he said: Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. Amen, amen I say to you: one of you that eateth with me shall betray me. The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of whom he spoke. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: Is it I, Lord? But he,” unwilling to discover the traitor, “answering, said: One of the twelve, that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me.” This circumstance being common to all present, pointed at no one in particular: to this he further added the reason of his declining to name him aloud, which was the obedience he owed to the commands of his heavenly Father, in compliance with which he chose to submit patiently to every humiliating and painful circumstance of his approaching passion, and thus literally to fulfil things which had been written of him. “The Son of man indeed,” said he, “goeth” to death, “as it is written of him; but wo to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him,” fearful of discovering himself by remaining any longer silent, “answering, said,” as the rest: “Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him,” but in so low a tone of voice as not to be heard by any person present: “Thou hast said it.”

The disciples, finding that they did not succeed in extorting a satisfactory answer from Jesus, "began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing." In this, however, they were yet unsuccessful, and they entertained the less suspicion of Judas, on account of the confidence which Jesus reposed in him; for he had intrusted him with the custody of such alms as were bestowed upon them. Hence it is probable that Judas enjoyed the reputation of a person of tried fidelity. At length Peter, extremely impatient to discover the secret, took advantage of the situation which he and John enjoyed at the table. "Now there was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" on account of his eminent chastity. "Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom he speaketh? When therefore he leaned down upon the breast of Jesus he saith to him: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered," in a low voice, but with an injunction not to publish it: "It is he to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." This mark of distinction tended to remove still farther any suspicions which the Apostles might otherwise have entertained to the disadvantage of Judas. Thus Peter, greatly to his disappointment, receiving no answer from John, continued as much in the dark as before. "And after" Judas had taken "the morsel, Satan entered into him," and taking fuller possession of his heart, urged him on to the execution of his horrid design. "And Jesus," seeing him resolutely determined upon it, "said to him" in a mild manner: "That which thou dost, do quickly." This was by no means an injunction to commit the crime already conceived in his heart, but merely an intimation of his readiness to suffer death. "Now no man at the table knew to what purpose he said this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: Buy those things which we have need of for the

festival-day, or that he should give something to the poor. He therefore, having received the morsel, went out immediately," full of indignation; "and it was night," perhaps about nine o'clock. "When he therefore was gone out, Jesus," seeing that by this first step of Judas his passion and death were at hand, and that they were soon to be followed by a glorious resurrection, "said: Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him," by his doctrine, his miracles, his humiliations and sufferings, "God will also glorify him in himself," by his triumph over sin and the devil, according to the promise made to him in the temple by the voice from above: "and immediately will he glorify him," first, by his resurrection, and afterwards by exalting him to eternal happiness in heaven. Let Christians learn from the example of Christ, that if they would be glorified with him in heaven, they must first glorify God here on earth by humility, by patience, and the practice of good works.

CHAPTER CXXIX

THE SECOND ALTERCATION OF THE APOSTLES CONCERNING PRIMACY—PETER'S DENIAL IS FORETOLD. LUKE XXII. 24—38. JOHN XIII. 33—38. MATT. XXVI. 31—35. MARK XIV. 30, 31.

As Christ had just signified that he was soon to quit the world, and to be glorified in the kingdom of his Father, the Apostles took occasion to renew their former altercation concerning the primacy. "And there was a strife amongst them which of them seemed to be greatest." Jesus endeavoured to restore peace and unanimity amongst them: 1. By explaining the nature of the employments and dignities of his spiritual kingdom in this world. 2. By promising them so perfect an equality both of honour and of

happiness in heaven as would not fail to satisfy their most sanguine wishes. "And he said to them," as he had done on a former occasion: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that have power over them are called benefactors," and are looked up to as such by others, when at the same time they feel the weight of their authority. "Let it not be so with you: but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the least, and he that is the chief, as he that serveth." Of this conduct Jesus holds forth his own personal example as an instance: "For which," says he, "is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," and ministereth to all your wants, and so must you be content to serve one another. He next speaks with due praise of their steadfastness in his service; and, in lieu of temporal dignities, promises them an ample reward hereafter. "And you," said he, "are they who have continued with me in my temptations" and troubles; and in recompense of your fidelity, "I dispose to you, as my father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," that is, the spiritual Israel, or the whole Church of God. Hence he left them to infer that their present altercation concerning superiority was needless, and their mutual jealousy of each other ill-founded. Yet, lest they should be puffed up with this acknowledgment of their fidelity, Jesus humbled them by stating two exceptions, the first of which concerned them all as a body, the second regarded Peter individually. "Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalised in me this night. For it is written (Zech. xiii. 7): I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." Their fault in this instance was not so much in fleeing away, as in the principle or motive which induced them to do so, and which consisted in an excessive attachment to this life, and in a want of that faith and hope which they had placed in him. He however

added, as a subject of consolation, that he would not fail to gather them together. "But after I shall be risen again," said he, "I will go before you into Galilee."

The idea of being classed with the other Apostles under the same description of cowardice and weakness gave offence to Peter, and he became eager to show his Master how little this was applicable to him individually. "And answering, he said to him : Although all shall be scandalised in thee, I will never be scandalised. And the Lord," repressing this blamable self-confidence, "said : Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," that is, may toss you about with troubles to shake your faith. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Then leaving Peter to guess at the meaning of these words, which as yet he understood not perfectly, Jesus addressed himself to the others in the most affectionate terms, offering them some consolation under the disgrace which he had just foretold to them. "My little children," said he, "yet awhile I am with you. You shall seek me, and, as I said to the Jews, whither I go, you cannot come ; so I say it also to you " in your present weak and timid state of mind. What I chiefly recommend to you is a spirit of mutual charity. Yes, "a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you ;" that is, with a spiritual love and affection, even so as after my example to prefer the salvation of your brethren before your own life. Wherefore see "that you also love one another " in like manner. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. Peter," feeling yet rather hurt at the doubt which Jesus seemed to have of his fidelity and attachment, "saith to him ; Lord, whither goest thou ?" for he wished to have a further explanation as to what he had asserted of their not being able to accompany him. "Jesus answered " as before : "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt hereafter. "Peter," full of senti-

ments of love and attachment towards Jesus, but not yet sensible of his own weakness, nor conscious how much more deeply the love of life was rooted in his heart, "saith to him" resolutely: "Why cannot I follow thee now? Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death: I will lay down my life for thee. Jesus answered him: Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Amen, amen I say to thee: Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me." Yes, I say, "to-day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

But notwithstanding this explicit declaration of his approaching weakness, Peter became not more diffident of himself: he even "spoke the more vehemently: Yea, though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples," resolving not to be behind-hand with Peter in their professions of courage and fidelity. Yet when the hour of trial came they proved equally weak, and were no less intimidated than Peter. What a striking picture of human weakness! Jesus now proceeded to inform them of those dangers to which, by following him, they were exposed. He first recalled to their recollection the time when he sent them as missionaries destitute of every necessary of life: "And he said to them: When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want any thing? But they said, Nothing;" because on that occasion such as were well disposed towards Jesus had joyfully received them into their houses, and abundantly supplied them with every necessary assistance. But he now assured them, that in this second separation from him, which was drawing nigh, the state of things would, in their regard, be very different. "Then he said unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip, and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you that this, that is written, must yet be fulfilled in me, *and with the wicked was he reckoned* (Isa. lii. 12). For the things concerning me

have an end." He then forewarns them, that as himself should shortly be condemned to die as a thief or a robber, so in like manner they, as his followers, must expect to meet with a similar treatment. In fact, the Pharisees had given orders that the eleven Apostles should be seized together with Jesus, hoping thus at once to annihilate what they styled a new sect in its very origin, and, as it were, in its very cradle. "But" the Apostles "said: Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them: It is enough" to explain my meaning, thereby intimating that he did not speak in a literal sense, for if it were necessary to fight, not twelve swords would have been sufficient.

CHAPTER CXXX.

CHRIST'S DISCOURSE AFTER THE LAST SUPPER—HE COMFORTS HIS APOSTLES—PROFESSES HIMSELF THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE—REQUIRES LOVE AND OBEDIENCE—PROMISES THE HOLY GHOST THE COMFORTER. JOHN XIV.

THE three following chapters contain the incomparable discourse which Jesus had with his Apostles after his last supper. They were under no small agitation of mind upon several accounts, and were particularly hurt by Christ's declaring the impossibility of their following him. This declaration comprised all, not excepting even Peter, the most fearless and intrepid among them. They were apprehensive of losing him entirely, and with him all the fruits of their past labours and their most flattering hopes. Christ, therefore, begins by dissipating their groundless fears and rectifying their misconception of things; and as this originated in their being accustomed to view him in no other light than as a common man, he exhorts them to believe in him with a faith equally strong with that by which they believe in God

himself, and thus to fix the eyes of their soul upon his Divine nature and the unchangeable certainty of his promises. This he holds out to them as the only remedy or safeguard against their desponding thoughts in the present trying moment. "Let not your heart be troubled," says he, "you believe in God," and put your trust in him; "believe also" and trust "in me his only and co-equal Son," and be assured of the effect of my promises in your favour. "In my Father's house there are many mansions," sufficient for you all. "If not I would have told you," that you need not expect a place in my kingdom: but be assured that you shall dwell there with me, "because I go to prepare you a place. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again" in due time, "and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be," and may receive with me the reward of eternal happiness in my kingdom. "And whither I go, you know, and the way you know. Thomas saith to him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" They knew it, says St. Austin, but they did not know that they knew it. They knew their Master Jesus Christ, and he was the way: they also knew, that is, believed the kingdom of heaven, but they knew not that he was returning thither: for as yet their imaginations were fixed on a temporal kingdom. "Jesus saith to him: I am the way" by my doctrine and example, "and the truth" by my promises, "and the life" by the graces I offer and give. Wherefore "no one cometh to the Father but by me," by believing in my doctrine, and by following my example, and by applying to himself the merits of my passion and death. "If you had known me" more perfectly "you would doubtless have known my Father also," he being one with me, "and from henceforth," after the coming of the Holy Ghost, "you shall know him" with a more perfect knowledge; "and you have seen him" by the faith which you have had in me. "Philip saith to him," with a holy eagerness: "Lord, show us the Father, and it

is enough for us. Jesus saith to him: So long a time have I been with you," teaching you who I am both by my words and actions, "and have you not known me?" If you beheld me and my Divine nature with the eyes of faith, in seeing me you would see the Father also. Yes, "Philip, he that seeth me, seeth also the Father:" that is, whoever sees or knows that Jesus is the Son of God, knows with equal certainty that God is the Father of Jesus, all correlatives being inseparable in their nature and in the idea we form of them: so that he who sees or knows by faith who Jesus is, cannot but know that Jesus is one with his eternal Father, not one person, as the Sabellians fancied, but one in nature and substance. The ancient fathers take notice against the Arians, that these words, and others that follow in this chapter, could not be true if Christ were no more than a creature, though ever so perfect: there being an infinite distance betwixt God and the highest of his creatures. Wherefore Christ thus expresses his astonishment at Philip's request: "How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" since we have the same essence, the same wisdom, and the same power. Hence "the words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself," and what I do, I do it not of myself. "But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works. Do you not believe that I am" thus "in the Father, and the Father in me?" If you believe it not on account of my words, "believe at least on account of the works themselves," which so clearly prove it: "Amen, amen I say to you: he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do: because I go to the Father, and whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do; that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Christ speaks of the greatness of visible miracles, and tells his Apostles that after his ascension they shall be enabled even to do greater miracles than those which he has yet shown to the world. This power he communicated to

his disciples, in order that they might be enabled to convert the world; and perhaps the greatest of all miracles was the very conversion of an idolatrous world. And to show that his power was the same with that of his Father, he adds: "If you shall ask me" also "any thing in my name, that will I do." As a further subject of consolation, Christ assures his Apostles that if they loved him, and showed this love by keeping his commandments, he would send them another comforter besides himself, viz. the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Ghost. "If you love me," says he, "keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will send you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever," and this comforter shall be "the Spirit of Truth, whom the world," being carnal and earthly-minded, "cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but you shall know him, because he shall abide with you," not in a corporeal visible manner, as I have done, but he "shall be in you" in a manner altogether spiritual and Divine, as the spirit of your spirit, and as the soul of your soul. Likewise, "I" myself "will not leave you orphans: I will come to you" again, after my resurrection. "Yet a while, and the world seeth me no more, but you shall see me, because I live" after my death, "and you shall live" with me. "In that day, when I am risen again, you shall know that I am in my Father" by the unity of one and the same nature, "and that you" are "in me" as members of my body, "and I in you" as the head united to its members, and sanctifying you with my holy Spirit. But to obtain this knowledge, and in gratitude for so great a blessing, you must love me, and give proof of your love by obeying my injunctions. For "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith to him (not he called Iscariot): Lord, what is the reason that thou art about to manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?"

For this Apostle imagined that the Messiah would manifest his glory as a temporal king, not to them only, but to all the world. But Christ informs him that he spoke only of a manifestation of his love to those that loved him, and therefore that the world was unqualified for such a Divine manifestation, being seated in wickedness, and an enemy to what fits souls for a fellowship with heaven. Wherefore, as those only who truly love him are to be honoured with his familiar converse, and admitted to intimate communications of grace and favour, it was easy to assign a reason for the distinction which he made between them and the world, viz. their love for him on the one side, and the world's hatred and indifference on the other. Hence "Jesus answered" Judas, "and said to him: If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him" with a fresh increase of graces and blessings, "and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words; and the word that you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will suggest all things to you, whatsoever I shall have said to you," in order that you may be able to understand and practise them. In the meantime I bequeath you my peace: "Peace I leave to you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth it, do I give it to you." The peace of the world is ever false and deceitful like itself; my peace is true and permanent: I do not give it, in the usual manner of the world, by empty, unmeaning speeches and wishes, but by solid and efficacious wishes; lastly, my peace is not such as the world usually wishes to its followers, viz. the enjoyment of health, a long life, the gratification of sensual pleasures; but, on the contrary, it consists in the spiritual blessings of grace here, and eternal enjoyment of glory hereafter.

The Apostles seem to have been most sensibly affected

with this last farewell, even to the shedding of tears, and thereupon Jesus exhorted them by no means to give way to immoderate grief: "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid," says he, "you have heard that I said to you; I go and I come to you again. In case you loved me" truly, instead of being afflicted as you are, "you would doubtless be glad that I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I" as man, and will make my humanity partaker of that glory which belongs to me as God. "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall have come to pass, you may believe," and that seeing me ascend up into heaven, you may be assured that I go to take possession of that glory which belongs to me as the Son of God. "Now I will not speak many things with you. For the prince of this world," that is the devil, "cometh" to exercise all his fury against me, "and" yet "in me he hath not any thing" that belongs to him. "But" I abandon myself to his rage, "that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father hath commanded me," though at the expense of my honour and life. "Arise, let us go hence," and wait courageously the arrival of our enemies. "And when they had said an hymn, they went forth towards the Mount of Olives" (Mark xiv. 26.)

CHAPTER CXXXI.

CONTINUATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DISCOURSE AFTER HIS LAST SUPPER. JOHN XV.; XVI. 1—5.

AFTER having thus comforted his disciples, and armed them against any immoderate sorrow on account of his death, Jesus now proceeds to caution them against other evils of more dangerous consequence, viz. an inconstancy in faith, a coldness in charity, and a want of patience and longanimity under persecution. He exhorts them to keep themselves,

even during his absence, closely united to him, by means of faith and of love. Hence he compares himself to a vine, his Father to a husbandman or dresser of vines, and his disciples to the branches of this vine. He styles himself the true vine, because he more fully influences the faithful, who are the members of his body, than the vine influences and nourishes its branches. With regard to the vine, it is requisite that the branch should remain united with the stock; likewise, that it be not barren, but produce fruit; and lastly, that it produce fruit plentifully. Thus it ought to be with regard to Christians, who adhere to Christ through faith. Those branches which are united to him, and yet produce not the fruit of good works, will infallibly be cut off from the stock by the Father as useless wood. Those branches which already bear fruit the Father will prune; and, by lopping off all superfluous wood, will render them still more fruitful.

“I am the true vine,” says Jesus Christ, those that believe in me are the branches, “and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, he will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit.” Applying this comparison to his disciples, Jesus acknowledges them to be already dressed and pruned branches, inasmuch as their minds were disengaged from worldly superfluities. It remained that they should bear fruit in great plenty, and to affect this it was necessary that they should abide immovably in him, and he in them. To this union he urgently exhorts them, by describing the great advantages which would thence accrue to them. “Now you are clean,” says he, and like to pruned branches, “by reason of the word which I have spoken to you,” and which you have received. It only remains to bring forth fruit in greater abundance. For this purpose “abide in me and I in you.” For “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in me” by faith, “and I in him”

by grace, "the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing" meritorious of a reward in heaven. And therefore it is of the utmost importance that you remain invariably attached to me. "If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as an" useless "branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire" of hell, "and" there "he shall burn" eternally without being consumed. And, on the contrary, "if you abide in me" by a lively faith, "and my words abide in you" by an ardent charity, which may make you fruitful in all good works, "you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you," provided it be for the greater glory of God. For as the vine-dresser glories in the abundance which his vine produces, so "in this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit, and become my" true "disciples," by following my doctrine and imitating the holiness of my life.

Jesus now proceeds to caution his followers against allowing their charity to grow cold during his absence, either in regard to himself or their neighbour. With regard to himself, he says that their love towards him ought to be constant, like that love which he entertained for them, and which was copied from that love which his Father had borne towards him his Son. "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide in my love," as I abide in the love of my Father. "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and do abide in his love. These things have I spoken to you, that" you may practise them, and that thus "my joy may be in you" as my true followers, "and" that "your joy" in me "may be filled," and may go on increasing to the end. With regard to your neighbour, "this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Now "greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," which is what I am about to do for you. "You are," therefore, truly "my

friends, if you do the things that I command you," and if you love your brethren so as to be willing to give your life for them. "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth. But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known to you," by laying open to you his designs in my regard, and the graces which he purposes to impart to you. Yet, lest this glorious title of being his intimate *friends* should become a subject of vain glory, our Saviour reminds his disciples that it is not they themselves who have first chosen to attach themselves to him, but that it is he himself who has distinguished them by his own free choice. "You have not chosen me," says he, "but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go" and declare the will of God to the world; "and should bring forth" much and lasting "fruit" in the conversion of souls, "and" that "your fruit should remain" even to the end, by the constant profession and practice of true virtue and religion. In the performance of this work, labour assiduously, so as to merit "that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you" again, "that you love one another" with a sincere, mutual affection, so as to be willing even to die for each other, as I am going to do for you.

Jesus, in the next place, cautions his Apostles against all excessive dread of persecution: which he does by holding out to them his own example of suffering and fortitude. "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But," what ought to comfort you under all your sufferings, is the justice of your cause, and

the injustice of your persecutors, for "all these things they will do to you," not on account of any misdemeanour, but "for my name's sake," and in hatred of my person, "because they know not him that sent me." But this their ignorance does not excuse them. It is true, that "if I had not come, and spoken to them" plainly concerning my divinity, "they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin," and their incredulity can only be the effect of wilful blindness and prepossession against me. Now "he that hateth me, hateth my Father also," who is God. Moreover, "if I had not done amongst them the" miraculous "works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin" in disbelieving and rejecting me: "but now they have both seen" the miracles which I have done in their favour, "and" yet "they have hated both me and my Father," which shows their obstinate and habitual wickedness. But this hath so happened, "that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: *They have hated me without cause.*"

He further strengthens them against the dread of persecution, by promising to send them the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, who would oppose the weight of his testimony to the calumnies of the Jews, and show, by various ways, that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Messiah, by the voice of his numerous disciples, by the many miracles which they would work in his name, and by the conversion of great numbers of his declared enemies, who would avow their conviction, and embrace his holy religion. "But when the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he shall give testimony of me," and with wonderful efficacy shall cause my doctrine to be acknowledged throughout the world. "And you" also, though now so weak and fearful, "shall give testimony" of me and of my divinity, because you are with me "from the beginning" of my preaching, and have witnessed, both in my words and actions, a wisdom and power truly divine.

Having armed his Apostles with zeal and courage by these powerful motives, Jesus now at length foretells to them more in particular the persecutions which they would have to undergo; lest, by coming upon them unexpectedly, they might occasion in their minds the greater trouble and anxiety. "These things have I spoken to you," says he, "that you may not be scandalised. They will put you out of the synagogues: moreover the hour cometh," when their blindness will be so great, "that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them," and may thus find, even in your sufferings themselves, the source of your patience and consolation, by reflecting that you suffer for a God who knows them, who foretold them to you, and who will hereafter abundantly recompense all your crosses. "But I told not these things from the beginning, because I was with you;" and as they were to come to pass only after my decease, it would have occasioned you unnecessary trouble and sorrow before the time.

CHAPTER CXXXII.

A SECOND CONTINUATION OF CHRIST'S DISCOURSE. JOHN XVI.
5—33.

JESUS being about to return to his Father, in order to soften the affliction which this intelligence would naturally convey to his Apostles, represents his departure under the figure of an ordinary journey, and expresses his surprise that they did not, as is usual amongst intimate friends, more particularly inquire into the motive of his journey, the nature of his employment when with his Father, and the benefits which would thence accrue to them. He gently rebukes them, that

instead of evincing so laudable a curiosity, they allowed themselves to be overwhelmed with grief at the first communication of his departure. "And now," says he, "I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken of these things, sorrow hath filled your heart." We cannot sufficiently admire the sweet and humane conduct of our Saviour, in thus endeavouring to soothe the affliction of his disciples, whilst he himself was actually on the way to suffer a cruel and ignominious death.

He then adverts to the reasons which rendered his departure necessary. "But I tell you the truth," says he, "it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin," which the Jews and all obstinate unbelievers commit; "because they have not believed in me," after so many miracles, and so many pressing motives, that ought to induce them to submit to the Christian faith "and of" the "justice" of my cause and of my innocence, a certain proof of which will be, "because I go to the Father," and ascend to eternal glory, "and you shall see me no longer" upon earth, being seated at his right hand in heaven: "and of" the "judgment" or condemnation of the world; "because the prince of this world is already judged," is stripped of his usurped empire over mankind, and condemned to eternal flames; and, therefore, all those that are enslaved to him by sin, can expect no other treatment than to be involved in the same damnation. These considerations, so glorious for Jesus, should not only have induced his disciples to consent to his departure, but even to have hastened, if possible, an event which tended so much to the advancement of his glory.

With regard to the Apostles themselves, their state of weakness and ignorance prevented him from imparting to them at present many other things which they would know

afterwards, when he should send down his holy Spirit upon them. "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come," he will fortify you against the severest trials, "and will teach you" and the Church "all truth : for he shall not speak from himself" only, because he is not from himself, but proceedeth from the Father and the Son ; "but what things soever he shall hear" from the Father and the Son, "he shall speak, and the things that are come, he shall show you," so as to make you perfectly understand my gospel in the spiritual design of it. "He shall glorify me" by publishing it throughout the world, "because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine. Therefore I said that he shall receive of mine and show it to you."

Jesus once more bids them farewell, informing them that shortly they shall lose sight of him, but that soon afterwards they shall again see him risen from the dead. "A little while," says he, "and now you shall not see me : and again a little while and you shall see me : because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said," in a low voice, "one to another : What is this that he saith to us : A little while, and you shall not see me ; and again a little while and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father ? They said therefore : What is this that he saith : A little while ? We know not what he speaketh. And Jesus," without having heard them, "knew that they had a mind to ask him, and he said to them : Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said : A little while, and you shall not see me ; and again, a little while, and you shall see me. Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, and the world shall rejoice : and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come ; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born

into the world." The pains of child-bearing, however sharp, are transient, and are followed by a lasting joy. "So also," it shall be in your regard; "you now indeed have sorrow," because the hour is come when I am to be separated from you by death. "But I will see you again," after my resurrection, "and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you. And in that day you shall not need to "ask me any thing;" but you shall perfectly understand by the event the meaning of this *little while* which now seems so involved in mystery. "Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name," by the merits of me your Mediator and Redeemer: "ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be complete," by the present satisfaction you will have in receiving the effect of your prayers, and by the hope you will conceive of obtaining one day the accomplishment of all your desires. "These things I have spoken to you in proverbs; the hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will speak to you openly concerning the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you that I," though your Redeemer and Advocate, "will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." In effect, "I came forth from the Father," as begotten of him from all eternity, "and am come into the world" in order to redeem it from sin and hell: "and," as man, "I go to the Father," with whom I am, and have always been as God. "His disciples say to him: Behold now thou speakest plainly, and usest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things," being more and more confirmed that thou art the Messiah, the true Son of God, "and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God. Jesus answered them: Do you now believe? Behold the hour is at hand, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his home, and leave

me alone: and " yet " I am not alone, because the Father is with me," and will not abandon me. " These things I have spoken to you," not by way of reproaching you for your future infidelity, but " that in me you may have peace," protection, and comfort, amidst the evils that await you: for " in the world you shall meet with distress; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world," and by my victory over it have merited for you the graces necessary that you likewise may overcome it yourselves, and may thus obtain an eternal crown of glory.

CHAPTER CXXXIII.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST BEFORE HIS PASSION.

JOHN XVII.

" THESE things Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said " the following prayer, which is divided into three parts. In the first, he prays for himself; in the second, for his Apostles; in the third, for all the elect. He spoke it aloud for the instruction of his Apostles, and the beloved disciple has recorded it for the instruction, comfort, and consolation of the whole Church. " Father, the hour " of my death " is come, glorify thy Son " by raising him again to life, " that thy Son may " reciprocally " glorify thee," by making thee known and adored throughout the earth. " As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him," so exalt him to that state in which he may exercise that power, by bringing many to the faith, and by fitting them for eternal life. " Now this is " the way to " eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God," in opposition to those false gods they now ignorantly worship, " and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent into the world " as the Saviour of mankind. " I have glorified thee upon the earth," by my preaching and miracles:

“I have accomplished the ” great “work ” of man’s sanctification, “ which thou gavest me to do : and now, O Father, glorify me with thyself,” by exalting my human nature to thy right hand, and by crowning me “ with that glory which,” as to my Divine nature, “ I had with thee before the world was.”

Jesus having thus prayed for himself as man, next intercedes for his Apostles, as the faithful ministers of his word. “I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me,” and have separated them from “ out of the world. Thine they were ” by creation, “and thou gavest them to me ” for my disciples, “ and they have kept thy word,” which I announced to them as coming from thee. “Now they have known that all things which thou hast given me,” and authorised me to say and do, “are from thee. For the words which thou gavest me, I have given ” and declared “ to them ; and they have received them ” as thine with the greatest docility : “and have known for certain that I came forth from thee,” as thy only and eternal begotten Son, “and they have believed that thou didst send me ” into the world as the promised Messiah whom they expected. “I pray,” therefore, “for them” efficaciously ; “I pray not,” in this address, “for” the wicked and reprobate part of “the world,” whose principle is a love of pleasure, “but for them whom thou hast given me” as my disciples, who are dear to me, “because they are thine. And all my things are thine, and thine are mine :” hence those whom thou hast given me are both thine and mine, which engages me doubly to pray for them. “And ” moreover as “I am glorified in them ” by their faith in me, and by the ready obedience which they have paid to my words, so this is an additional motive for interesting myself in their preservation. “And now I am not in the world ” to watch over them in a visible manner, “but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep ” and protect “them ” during my absence, “in thy name, whom thou hast given me,” and who always be-

long to thee ; preserve them in the union of faith and of charity, “ that they may be one ” in mind and heart, “ as we also are ” one in nature and substance. “ Whilst I was with them ” in the world, “ I kept them in my name. Those whom thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition,” the perfidious Judas, by his own fault, “ that the scripture may be fulfilled (Psalm cviii. 8). And now I come to thee : and these things I speak in the world,” in the presence of my disciples, “ that they may have my joy filled in themselves,” by their firm hope of being partakers of the same happiness with myself. “ I have given them thy word,” which they received with faith and with courage : “ and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world.” However, “ I pray not that thou take them away out of the world, but that thou preserve them from evil,” so as to come off victorious over all the temptations and persecutions which the devil and the world shall raise against them. “ They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world ; ” and hence they are better disposed to receive the impressions of thy grace and sanctity “ Sanctify them,” therefore, “ in truth,” communicate to them a true sanctity, in order to fit them for the sublime employment of announcing “ thy word,” which “ is truth ” itself. For “ as thou hast sent me into the world ” to announce thy truth to men, “ so I also have sent them ” for the same end. “ And I sanctify myself for them,” by devoting and offering myself in sacrifice for them : “ that they also may be sanctified in truth,” and may become worthy ministers and martyrs of thy truth.

Having thus prayed for his Apostles, Jesus now prays for the elect in general, who, through their ministry, were in all succeeding ages to believe in him. In their behalf, he asks for two favours of the highest import, one of which regarded this life, the other the world to come.

He prays first, that they may be all one, and that by the unity of the same faith and charity they may avoid schism

and heresy ; the former being a breach of charity, and the latter a division of faith. He solicits for them this union, in honour and imitation of that union which subsists reciprocally between the Father and the Son : in order that this inviolable unity of doctrine and of love among the faithful may convince the infidel world that the Father has sent him into the world : it being impossible that so many different persons should agree in the same sentiments, so opposite to those of corrupt nature, had they not imbibed them from one and the same source of truth.

He adds that, to effect this union of the faithful, which is in some sort a representation of the unity of the Divine persons, he has made them partakers of his divinity by the mystery of his body and blood, which unites into one mystical body all the faithful, since they all feed here upon one and the same Divine food. For Jesus being in them by his own proper flesh, and his Father being in *him* by his Divine nature, which is united to his flesh by a personal union, hence the Father is in all the faithful by means of the Son, and all the faithful are united to the Father by the Son, and thus attain to the most perfect union imaginable.

“Nor do I pray for them only” (speaking of his Apostles), “but for those also, who through their word” and ministry “shall believe in me : that they all may be one” by the unity of the same spirit, of the same faith, and of the same charity ; and that, “as thou, Father,” art “in me, and I in thee, they also may be one in us, that” so “the world may believe that thou hast sent me” as the true Messiah, by beholding the union which my disciples will have amongst themselves, and the society thou art pleased they should have with thee. “And the glory which thou hast given me,” as Mediator and head of the Church, “I have given to them,” by communicating to them at baptism that grace and holiness which makes me glorious, and by giving them for their food my own flesh united to the divinity which I received from thee, “that they may be one” with us, “as we also,”

thou and I, "are one." For by thus nourishing them with my own flesh, "I" am "in them, and" as "thou" art always "in me," thou art likewise in them with me, "that they may be perfectly united" among themselves in one body, as thou and I are one, "and that the world may know" and be convinced by this our concord, that I and they act by thy commission, "and that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them" as members of my mystical body, as "thou also hast loved me," eternally and unchangeably.

The second favour which Jesus asks of his Father in behalf of the faithful is, that they may be partakers with him of everlasting glory in heaven. "Father," says he, "I will" and desire, "that where I am, they also whom thou has given me may be with me, that they may see" and enjoy "my glory which thou hast given me" from all eternity as God, and to which thou predestinatest me as man, "because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world." O "just Father," who renderest to every one according to his works, "the world" will have no part in this glory, because it "hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known" and believed "that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name" and Divine nature "to them, and will make it known" still more and more, by manifesting thy goodness and the tender bowels of thy mercy in their regard, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be" also "in them, and" that "I" likewise may be "in them" by grace and the communion of my body and blood: for in thus possessing me, in whom thou hast placed all thy affection, they will themselves become objects of thy love, and, by being united to me as to their head, they will be entitled to share with me in my glory.

CHAPTER CXXXIV.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. MATT. XXVI. 36—56; MARK XIV. 32—51; LUKE XXII. 39—53; JOHN XVIII. 1—11.

“WHEN Jesus had spoken these things, he went out with his disciples over the brook Cedron,” which runs at the foot of Mount Olivet, to the east of Jerusalem, and is said to be six or seven feet broad. David, who was a figure of Jesus Christ, passed likewise this torrent in great trouble, when he fled from his rebellious son Absalom. “And he went, according to his custom, to the mountain of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. Then Jesus cometh with them into a village called Gethsemani, where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. (And Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often resorted thither together with his disciples.)” This we may consider as the first step of our blessed Lord towards his approaching passion, every minute circumstance of which tended to show to the fullest conviction, that he suffered voluntarily and without compulsion. Of this we need no other proof that his resorting knowingly to a place often frequented by him, and consequently well known to Judas, who, he was well aware, intended to betray him. In fact, he went purposely where he knew his enemies would search for him, thus to spare them the trouble of a more tedious pursuit.

The seizure of Jesus was preceded by his sadness in the garden, his prayer to his heavenly Father, and the drowsiness of the Apostles. Upon his entering into the garden, “he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go and pray yonder” (teaching us hereby to seek retirement and solitude when we converse with God in prayer); and he added: “Pray” likewise yourselves, “lest you enter into tempta-

tion ;” but they neglected this advice, and were soon overcome, shamefully abandoning their Master. It was moreover, on the part of Jesus, the effect of a tender condescension to the weakness of his Apostles that made him withdraw himself from them on this occasion, in order thus to hide from them the sight of that mortal sadness which was about to affect him in so surprising a manner, and which, in their present state, would probably have been to them a subject of scandal. “And he taketh with him Peter, James, and John,” who had before been witnesses of his glorious transfiguration, and whom he knew to be more able than the rest to bear so severe a trial ; “and he began to fear, and to be heavy, to be sorrowful and sad.” Christ our Redeemer permitted, on this occasion, his human nature to be seized with all this fear and anguish. 1. To show that he was true man like us, and liable to all our infirmities, sin only excepted ; a truth which was one day to be called in question by the Manichees and Appollinarists. 2. Having charged himself with our sins, he would submit to all the humiliations and pains due to them, and so suffer both in his soul and body. 3. It was to comfort the weakest of his followers, and, by his voluntary sadness, teach them that their involuntary sadness and fear at the approach of death, or of any other calamity, is not sinful, provided they, like him, submit their natural repugnance to the will of God. 4. It was to show the great excess of his sufferings, the bare representation of which was sufficient to cast him into a mortal agony and produce these strange effects in his body. The alarming prospect of the most cruel sufferings which the mind of Jesus now represented to his flesh, affected it with a panic so violent as to cause all his blood to rush towards his heart ; but the determined resolution of his will to suffer caused him to view this death as now actually before his eyes ; and, under this certainty, his fear was changed into a sadness of heart beyond the reach of all human comfort. In a word, these two sensations jointly concurred to bring his

whole sacred humanity to the lowest degree of desolation, in which his body became overwhelmed with affliction at the approaching necessity of suffering a painful and ignominious death; and his soul no less shuddered at the share she was unavoidably to have in the sufferings of her guiltless partner.

“Then” intimating to his three disciples the great inward agony which he underwent, “he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even to death: stay here and watch with me. And having gone a little further, he himself was withdrawn from them the length of a stone’s cast,” in order to conceal from them the severity of his conflict: and kneeling down he prayed, saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done. And,” to teach us not to disdain help from any of God’s creatures, however inferior in dignity, “an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him” corporally, that his sufferings might not terminate here, though nature was brought to the last extremity, and was dissolving herself in a mortal sweat: this angel strengthened him likewise spiritually, by encouraging him to suffer from the motives of God’s honour and glory, and the salvation of innumerable souls. “And Jesus fell flat on the ground upon his face, praying; and being in an agony, he prayed the longer;” not that he had any need of prayer himself, but to teach us, by his example, to be particularly instant in our supplications when beset with the greatest difficulties. “And he prayed with a strong cry and tears (Heb. v. 7), that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, saying: Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. All things are possible to thee, take away this cup from me, but not what I will, but what thou wilt. And” during this conflict betwixt his rational faculty accepting of death, and his inferior nature seeking to be relieved from it, “his sweat was as drops trickling down upon the ground,” though in a very cold evening, as appears from their making a fire

in the high priest's hall (Mark xiv. 54). Owing to the violence of this combat which passed within him, the blood which had flowed collectively to the heart was now impetuously forced back to the extremities, and, forcing its way through the pores of the body, came forth in large drops, so as to bedew the ground on which he lay prostrate.

“And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them asleep through grief. And he said to them: Why sleep you? arise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. And he saith to Peter,” who had expressed so much zeal and resolution: “Simon, sleepest thou? What, could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing,” and ready even to suffer death, when the danger is at a distance; “but” in the midst of danger, and when death shows itself at hand, “the flesh is weak,” presently disavows the resolution of the spirit, and makes it an unwilling partaker of its weakness. “And going away again,” oppressed with grief, “he prayed, saying the same words: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them sleeping; for their eyes were heavy. And they knew not what to answer him,” like to those three comforters of Job, who sat down by him in a deep silence without opening their mouth. “And leaving them he went again, and prayed the third time, saying the self-same words,” in all which he would leave us a perfect example of perseverance in prayer, and of resignation and acquiescence under all the appointments of heaven. “And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep now, and take your rest:” for seeing his disciples heavy and overcome by sleep, instead of using harshness, he, with great compassion, bid them sleep and rest themselves; but their rest was not long: for a while after he awakened them, saying: “It is enough: the hour is come; behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; behold he that

will betray me is at hand. And while he was yet speaking, behold Judas, one of the twelve, having taken," for greater security, "a band of soldiers," consisting of 555 men, "and servants from the high priest and the Pharisees, cometh thither, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, with lanterns and torches, sent from the chief priests and elders of the people." As Jesus was unknown to the Romans, and as the servants themselves, although they had frequently seen him, might perhaps mistake his person, "he that betrayed him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he" whom you seek, "lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully:" thus insinuating that after he should once, according to the terms of his agreement, have pointed him out to their notice, he would no longer be answerable for his person; a caution which to him seemed highly necessary, as he might again make his escape out of their hands, as he had already done at Nazareth. Moreover, as the soldiers had orders to seize likewise the Apostles, it behoved them carefully to secure the gates of the garden, lest any of them should escape under the opportunity of a full moonshine. In pursuance therefore of this concerted plan, Judas, "when he was come" to the place, "went before them, and forthwith coming to Jesus, to kiss him, he said: Hail, Rabbi," a kind of salutation common with the Jews: "and" then, "kissed him. Jesus," with his usual kindness, to teach us to preserve charity with our greatest enemies, "said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come?" in other words, to what strange and wicked purpose dost thou here take advantage of thy easy access to my person? Then, with a sweetness capable of touching any heart that was not totally obdurate, he adds: "Judas, is it with a kiss thou betrayest the Son of man? that is, the Son of God, who, to save thee, became the Son of man. "Therefore Jesus knowing all things that were to come upon him, went forwards" toward the crowd, "and said to them" with great majesty: "Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of

Nazareth. Jesus said to them : I am *he*. Judas also, that betrayed him, stood with them. As soon, therefore, as he had said to them, I am he," as if it had been the terrible name Jehovah in Exodus, "they went backward," like persons thunderstruck, "and fell to the ground;" by which he showed them his all-powerful Godhead, and that he suffered only because it was his will. But they paid no attention to this wonderful miracle of his power. "Again, therefore, he asked them : Whom seek ye ? And they said : Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered : I have told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way," which implied a prohibition not to seize on any of his Apostles, that the word might be fulfilled which he said : Of those whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one;" mystically signifying that his sufferings were to be our ransom, and his apprehension our freedom.

"Then they" who accompanied Judas "drew near, and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. And they that were about him," that is, the disciples, "seeing what would follow, said to him : Lord, shall we strike with the sword ? Then Simon Peter, one of those who were with Jesus," without waiting for an answer, "stretching forth his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear, and the name of the servant was Malchus."

The above question, and the subsequent stroke given to the high priest's servant, are by three of the Evangelists attributed to one of the disciples, without naming him, for Peter being yet living when they wrote their gospels, he might have been liable to prosecution on the part of the chief priest for this opposition to his authority, had the fact been brought home to him by the unanswerable evidence of these his brethren. But as St. John wrote his gospel at the period of about twenty-nine years posterior to the death of Peter, he judged it proper to make us acquainted with this instance of his dauntless courage in standing up singly in defence of his Master against a Roman cohort of 555 men, assisted by

the servants of the priests, who formed no small addition to the armed band. "But Jesus" checked this impetuous ardour of his Apostle, and "answering said: Forbear, no more. And when he had touched his ear, he healed it;" for he was unwilling to give the least cause of complaint to his enemies. "Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard; for all that take the sword, shall perish with the sword:" that is, if by their own private authority they have recourse to the sword, and shed human blood, they deserve to perish, as the law ordains (Gen. ix. 6). Moreover, that they generally do perish, and sooner or later are overtaken by Divine justice, is affirmed by many instances of Divine vengeance on those who have imbrued their hands in human blood. As to his own person, Jesus declares that he stands not in need of any such protection or force. "Thinkest thou," said he, "that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? The chalice, which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled," which declare that so it must be done? "Then the band, and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him. In that same hour Jesus" reproached them for their seizing him in this manner, and "said to the chief priests and magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come to him: Are you come out as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs to apprehend me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power and darkness." He thus warned them not to consider his seizure as the effect of their schemes, or of their force, but to attribute it to the decrees of the Almighty. For, "all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away," and Peter with the rest; hereby justifying the prediction of Jesus concerning their general dispersion. However, we may consider it as miraculous, that eleven persons should effect their escape from

five or six hundred men who had been commissioned to seize them: and this appears the more wonderful by the following circumstance which took place on the occasion. "A certain young man," probably much attached to Jesus, "followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and" on his being noticed by some of the crowd, "they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them, naked," and so escaped to his own house. It is not known who this young man was. He does not appear to have been St. John or St. James, as some have imagined, but rather some person from the village of Gethsemani, who, upon the noise, came hastily out of bed to see what was the matter. St. Mark mentions this particular to insinuate the singular protection of Jesus over his Apostles, who made their escape on this occasion, though within the inclosure of the garden, and notwithstanding the orders given by the high priests to apprehend them. The truth was, that Christ had forbidden the Jews to molest his disciples, and thus had first bound fast *their hands* before he allowed his own to be confined.

CHAPTER CXXXV.

JESUS IS EXAMINED AND JUDGED BY CAIPHAS. MATT. XXVI.

57—68. MARK XIV. 53—65. LUKE XXII. 63—71.

JOHN XVIII. 13, 14, 19—27.

HAVING thus given substantial proof of his perfect liberty in regard to every circumstance of his seizure, and consequently of his subsequent passion, Jesus next evinces his innocence in a triumphant manner before three several tribunals. The first was that of Caiphas, where he was condemned: the second was that of Herod, where he was discharged as guiltless: the third was that of Pilate, where, though pronounced guiltless, he was condemned to an ignominious death.

“And they led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews: that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” From Annas “they led him to Caiphas the high priest, where all the priests, and the scribes, and the ancients, were assembled together. And Peter followed him afar off,” actuated at the same time by love and fear: the love he bore Jesus urged him on, and the apprehension of death hindered him from a nearer approach to his person, now in the hands of his enemies: “and so did another disciple follow on this occasion, and that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter: and when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall (Luke xxii. 55), and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them, at the fire, and warmed himself, that he might see the end. The high priest then,” instead of producing a charge against Jesus, and hearing his defence, “asked” him “of his disciples and of his doctrine,” two subjects which he was particularly earnest to investigate, in hopes of extorting something that might tend to criminate him. He asked, therefore, by what authority he formed to himself disciples, and what was the doctrine he taught them? But these two questions are visibly reducible to one, viz. to that of his doctrine: for he who teaches nothing but the truth is evidently authorised by all laws to form to himself disciples. This consideration caused Jesus to combine the question concerning his disciples with the question concerning the truth of his doctrine; and for the justification of the latter, he referred himself to the testimony of living witnesses. On a subject of this nature, he said that the high priest ought to have interrogated others rather than himself, and appeal to the evidence of those who had heard his doctrine, and

who could give them the minutest information concerning his principles.

But perhaps the high priest might allege that he broached his doctrine in private by night, or to such disciples only as could be depended upon for their secrecy. To this "Jesus answered him : I have spoken openly to the world : I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort, and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me ? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them : behold they know what things I have said," and, therefore, if I have been faulty in sowing errors, or plotting sedition, you may have enow to bear witness of it, and upon their legal testimony may proceed to acquit or condemn me. Nothing could be more reasonable or more in rule than this answer. "And" yet, "when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying : Answerest thou to the high priest so ? Jesus" meekly "answered him : If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil," and leave the vindication of it to the judge : "but if well, why strikest thou me ?" This happened in the house of Caiphas the high-priest ; for "Annas" had "sent him bound" there, as mentioned above.

After having failed in the attempt to draw Jesus into a snare by the above captious interrogation, "the chief priests and the whole council" found themselves under the necessity of having recourse to the evidence of others, agreeably to what he himself had suggested to them. And they "sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they found none" sufficient, "whereas many false witnesses had come in ;" a circumstance which decidedly proves the innocence of Jesus. "For many bore false witness against him, and their evidence did not agree" together, as it usually happens on such occasions. "Unjust witnesses have risen up against me," says the Psalmist, "and iniquity hath lied to itself" (Ps. xxvi. 12). "And last of all there came two false witnesses, and rising up, they bore false

witness against him, saying: We have heard him say: I am able to destroy the temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it; I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another, not made with hands. And their testimony did not agree," nor was it sufficient for his condemnation. The one witnessed that he said absolutely he would destroy it, *destruam*: the other, that he could or was able to destroy it, *possum destruere*: whereas his words were neither *destruam* nor *possum destruere*; but *solvite*, destroy you this temple. Moreover, Christ spoke of the temple of his body, as being the temple of the divinity, and they of the material temple at Jerusalem. It is likewise probable that they made other additions and false constructions not mentioned by the Evangelists. "And the high priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest thou nothing to the things laid to thy charge by these men?" (As if he had forgotten that for the last words which he spoke in his own defence he had suffered him to be struck on the face.) "But he held his peace, and answered nothing," and that for many reasons: 1. Because their testimony, contradicting and destroying itself, needed no further confutation. 2. Because he foresaw his speaking would have no good effect upon his malicious accusers and judges, but would rather serve to increase their guilt. 3. To show the perfect moderation and mastery of his passions, and a most entire resignation to his Father's will, "leaving us an example," as St. Peter says, "that we should follow his steps" (1 Peter ii. 23).

We may, from the text of St. Luke, gather that the principal persons among the Jews who acted as the accusers of Jesus, finding that, in consequence of the contradictory testimony of the witnesses, they could now allege nothing more to his disadvantage, withdrew during the remainder of the night, for the purpose both of taking their necessary rest, and of gaining further time to plot his destruction by means of fresh accusations. Perhaps, with a view of being nearer the council-room, they might pass the night in the house of

Caiphas, to be in readiness the following day to finish this important business, which they had left incomplete. In the interim, they placed Jesus in the custody of their servants, "and the men that held him mocked him, and struck him" with their fists, and plucked off his hair. "And they blindfolded him, and smote his face. And they asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is he that struck thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against him," loading him with every species of insult which their own malice, and that of the devil, could suggest.

"And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priests and scribes met together, and brought him" again "before their council, saying: If thou be Christ, tell us:" they purposely concerted this unanimous request, as most likely to obtain a reply from him, which, if it proved to be in the affirmative, they would instantly deem a sufficient plea for condemning him to death. "And he replied: If I should tell you, you would not believe me, and if," to prove it, "I ask you" anything, "you will not answer me, nor dismiss me. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting at the right hand of the power of God. They all then said: Art thou therefore the Son of God? Who said: You say it, for I am." Which the Jews considered as a modest way of affirming anything relating to their own commendation. "Again the high priest asked of him, and said to him: Art thou Christ, the Son of the blessed God? I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us if thou art Christ, the Son of God. Jesus," out of reverence to that sacred name, "replied: Thou hast said it, I am really-so." It is true, the condition in which you see me at present bears no proportion to that high and sublime dignity: "nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter" the day will come when "you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This David and Daniel had foretold of the Messiah (Ps. cix. 1; Dan. vii. 13).

Jesus here spoke of the day of judgment, when these iniquitous judges will be brought to appear before him, and when, with their own eyes, they shall behold him in all his glory and majesty. He thus contrasted his future glory with his present state of humiliation, and the sentence which he will there pronounce against them with that sentence which they now so unjustly meditated to pronounce against him. He likewise made this public avowal, as an example to all succeeding martyrs, he being the first to lay down his life in support of that fundamental truth which they afterwards maintained at the expense of their lives. "Then the high priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed: what need we any more witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy" against God, whose Son he calls himself. "What is your opinion? But they answered and said: He is guilty of death. What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. Who all condemned him to be guilty of death. Then some began to spit in his face," which was the greatest note of infamy and disgrace amongst the Jews, "and to cover his face, and to buffet him. And others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck thee? And the servants," joining their masters in this inhuman treatment, "struck him" also "with the palms of their hands," to perplex him, as it were, by their united blows, had he, in compliance with their taunting suggestions, been inclined to name his tormentors. All these things were foretold of the Messiah by David in the Psalms, and by the prophets, especially Isaiah (see chap. l. 6; chap. liii. 2, &c.). Let us compassionate our blessed Lord under these his sufferings, and in opposition to this cruel malice of his enemies, let his followers cry out with the angel in the Apocalypse: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive power and divinity, honour and glory, for ever and ever.*

We must not confound the insults here offered to Jesus

with those of the preceding night. The latter are, by the sacred text, attributed to the servants who held Jesus in custody: *the men that held him*. Whereas the insults in the morning were the act and deed of those very judges who had just condemned him to death, *some of whom began to spit upon him*. Hence St. Mark, speaking of these last insults, carefully distinguishes between the part of the masters and that of their servants, by adding that, after some of the former had begun to spit upon him, the *servants* also smote *him upon the face*.

CHAPTER CXXXVI.

PETER'S DENIAL AND REPENTANCE. MATT. XXVI. 69—75. MARK XIV. 66—72. LUKE XXII. 54—62. JOHN XVIII. 25—27.

LET us now return to the garden of Olives, to trace the particulars of what happened to Peter. After surrendering his sword into the hands of some other person, he followed Jesus at a distance, as we have seen above, in company with another disciple, who was known to the high priest, and who procured his admission into the court where Jesus was undergoing his examination. "Now when Peter was in the court below, one of the maid-servants of the high-priest, that was portress, came; and when she had seen Peter warming himself, and had looked at him, she said" to all those who were there present: "This man also was with him." Then addressing herself to Peter himself, she added: "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: Woman, I know him not. I am not one of his disciples, I neither know nor understand what thou sayest." This he said under the conviction of her not being able to bring proof of her assertion. "Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed

themselves. And with them was Peter, also standing and warming him." Sensible, however, of his being now discovered, and of its being therefore unsafe for him to remain there any longer, he resolved to depart from the place. And," with this view, "he went forth before the court, and the cock crew" for the first time. Unfortunately for Peter, "as he went out at the gate, another maid saw him, and" taking particular notice of him, "she saith to them that were there: This man also" (pointing to Peter) "was with Jesus of Nazareth." This unexpected challenge of his person caused him to alter his plan, and to return again, lest he should seem to flee as conscious of the truth of the accusation. He probably too was afraid lest the portress, who recollected his features, should now refuse to open the door to him, whence his attempting to escape might be construed as an avowal of what was laid to his charge. He deemed it, therefore, the most prudent measure, in the present emergency, to replace himself among the servants, as it were to warm himself, and thus openly to brave the accusation. "And after a little while, another seeing him standing and warming himself, said: Thou also art one of them." The others joined in the same question, and "they said therefore to him: Art not thou also one of his disciples? But he denied again with an oath, and said: I am not: I do not know the man. After the space, as it were, of one hour, another man, one of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off, affirmed it, saying: Of a truth this man was also with him, for he is also a Galilean. Did not I see thee in the garden with him? And" now "they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them; for even thy speech doth discover thee," that "thou art a Galilean. Again therefore Peter denied, and he began to curse and to swear," saying: "I know not this man of whom you speak. I know not what thou sayest: and immediately as he was yet speaking, the cock crew again. And the Lord turning looked at Peter," and touched

his heart with a strong and efficacious grace. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice; and going out he wept bitterly" for his fault, a practice which he is said ever afterwards to have observed, as often as he heard the cock crow. Hence he has ever been considered as the model of all true penitents.

In this history we must distinctly consider the several denials of Peter by the separate times of his being attacked upon this subject, and not by the precise number of words spoken by him. Now the servants returned to the charge against him three different times, and there can be no doubt but that at each time many answers passed on both sides. We may observe on this occasion how easily one fall draws on another, and generally a deeper, as in the present case. Peter's first denial was a simple untruth; the second was an untruth, but corroborated with an oath which is called perjury; the third added to perjury horrible imprecations against himself.

CHAPTER CXXXVII.

JESUS IS DELIVERED UP TO PILATE. MATT. XXVII. 1, 2.
MARK XV. 1. LUKE XXIII. 1. JOHN XVIII. 28.—THE
DEATH OF JUDAS. MATT. XXVII. 3—10.

"Now in the morning early, the chief priests, with the ancients and the scribes," after they had wreaked their vengeance upon Jesus by the vilest treatment of his person, "took counsel against him, that they might put him to death;" for they could not execute this themselves, as the power of life and death had been taken from them about three years before. Besides, they were glad to throw upon another person the odium of a crime of which, in fact, they were certainly guilty. As both Jews and Gentiles were to have an equal share in the benefit of Christ's death, so

were they likewise in the inflicting of it; that as all receive the mercy of being saved by his blood, so none should be freed from the guilt of shedding it.

“And the whole multitude of them rising up, brought him bound from Caiphas into the palace of the Prætor, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor,” not so much to examine whether he were guilty, as to ratify the sentence of death which they had already pronounced against him. “And they entered not into the palace” or court of the governor, he being a heathen, “that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Then Judas who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it.” He had all along hoped that, by a miracle, Jesus would escape from the hands of his enemies, as he had done on former occasions; but being disappointed in this hope (which indeed Jesus had sufficiently precluded by declaring, on the preceding evening, that the Son of man was then finishing the course which had been assigned to him), his mind sunk; he was overwhelmed with insupportable anguish, and at last reduced to a state of the utmost despair. “And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself with a halter, and being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. But,” after the death of Judas, “the chief priests, having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona,” or treasury of the temple, “because it is the price of blood. And, after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter’s field,” which was out of the city to the south, “in order to be a burying place for strangers,” especially for the Roman soldiers, who had hitherto been interred in the common burying place of the Jews, which was considered as a great abomination. Thus the price of Jesus’s blood was employed

to the advantage of the Gentiles, and “for this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying: “And they took” (from Judas) “the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued” at that sum, “whom they prized of the children of Israel,” by agreeing with Judas for that purpose. “And they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed,” or decreed for me. This is the sense of the prophecy, the words being abridged in the gospel.

The cause which brought Judas to this unhappy end was no other than the love of money. This was his predominant passion. This he indulged at first in small injustices, by the opportunity of carrying the common purse; and as he neglected to mortify his evil inclinations, they insensibly gained ground upon him, till they introduced Satan into the possession of his whole soul, and so prevailed upon him to betray and sell his Lord and Master. What an instructive lesson is this for us to beware of our passions, and to stifle them betimes, lest they grow headstrong by being neglected in the beginning. Especially we should take care of that cheating vice, avarice, the source of innumerable evils, which so insensibly poisons the mind, that few or none are willing to think themselves infected with it. Hence how many pretexts and pretences are made use of to cloak the evil! How many ways of palliating even frauds, injustices, usuries, and other crimes, to the ruin of innumerable souls!

CHAPTER CXXXVIII.

JESUS IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE, WHO SENDS HIM TO HEROD.

MATT. XXVII. 12—25. MARK XV. 2—14. LUKE XXIII. 1—12. JOHN XVIII. 29—40.

“PILATE, therefore,” to accommodate himself to the vain scruple of the Jews, “went out to them, and said: What

accusation bring you against this man? They answered, and said to him: If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up to thee;" as if their will were a certain and infallible rule of justice, and that he ought by no means to call in question the guilt of a man condemned by judges of such strict impartiality. "Pilate therefore said to them: Take him you, and judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said to him: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which he said, signifying what death he should die:" for had the Jews condemned him according to the law, they could have sentenced him to no other capital punishment than that of being stoned to death, whereas if Pilate decreed him to die, it would be by the cross, in conformity with the usual practice of the Romans.

The Jews, finding that the governor was unwilling to condemn Jesus on their bare report, or to decide without giving him an impartial hearing, "began to accuse him" on three various heads, "saying: We have found this man perverting our nation" by dangerous novelties, "and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and pretending to be Christ the king." This last was a capital crime against the Roman people, when claimed in opposition to the authority of the emperor.

Pilate instantly saw that these imputed crimes were mere inventions of calumny, and therefore began to consider by what means he could deliver Jesus out of their hands. For this purpose he made use of three very different expedients: the first of which was consistent with reason and justice; the second in the highest degree ignominious; and the third an instance of the most barbarous cruelty.

Pilate began by a juridical investigation of the crimes imputed to Jesus, which he did first in his own judicial capacity, and afterwards by means of Herod. Of the three chief heads of accusation, he laid no great stress upon that of his having seduced the people, which supposed crime he considered as not within his jurisdiction. He seemed to pay

no greater regard to that of his having opposed the gathering of the tributes, which had never been made the subject of complaint by the publicans or tax-gatherers, as most certainly would have been the case had it been well founded. His assumed quality of king attracted Pilate's whole attention, and the importance of the subject naturally led him to sift it to the bottom. "Pilate, therefore, went into the hall again, and called Jesus. And Jesus stood before the governor" as a criminal, with his hands tied : "and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus," who could not have heard from the hall what the Jews had said to Pilate against him, "answered: Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of me?" Thus insinuating that it came from his malicious adversaries. "Pilate answered," somewhat peevishly, "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee up to me. What hast thou done?" He thus gave him to understand that the question he had proposed in his official capacity, originated not from any curiosity on his part, but that since the chief magistrates had delivered him up as a person affecting royalty, he now sought for information on the subject, in order that, being apprised of what he had to say in his own defence, he might be enabled to pass judgment with the greater impartiality. "Jesus answered," and explained the nature of that kingdom which he claimed as his own, in such a manner as to do away at once all grounds of jealousy on the part of the Roman emperor: "My kingdom," says he, "is not of this world," and therefore nowise prejudicial to Cæsar's authority: it is a spiritual kingdom, of which the minds of men are the uncontrolled and voluntary subjects. "If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive" to defend me with an armed force, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus" modestly "answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this

came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth" of God, and establish his worship among men. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," whether speaking to him outwardly by preaching, or by admonishing him inwardly by secret inspiration. Hence it clearly appeared that, though he were a king, this ought not to alarm the jealousy of Cæsar. In fact, the subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom are no other than the hearts and wills of mankind, his absolute orders are the efficacious attractions of grace, and the obedience and subjection he requires are the persuasion of the mind and the consent of the will to believe and practise what he commands. "Pilate," not perfectly understanding this explanation of Jesus concerning truth, "saith to him: What is truth? And when he had said this," apparently without waiting for any answer, "he went out again to the Jews, and said to the chief priests and to the people: I find no cause," or crime, "in this man." We here view Pilate in the favourable light of a judge pleading the cause of the accused party before his accusers, and what is extraordinary, a Pagan judge acting the part of an advocate in behalf of a Jewish king, whom he endeavours to screen from the malevolence of his own subjects.

"And when Jesus was accused by the chief priests and ancients in many things, he answered nothing. Pilate again asked him, saying: Dost thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against thee? Answerest thou nothing? Behold in how many things they accuse thee. But Jesus still answered nothing to any word, so that the governor wondered very much," that one who had the appearance of a sober, rational man, not devoid of eloquence, and openly favoured by his judge, should yet, though attacked by his mortal enemies, refuse to plead in his own defence, and that he should possess the greatest peace and tranquillity of soul under their heaviest accusations. We must here consider the silence of Jesus as a further convincing proof of the perfect freedom with which he offered

himself to suffer death for us ; and the favourable disposition which Pilate showed towards him is deservedly to be deemed as an illustrious attestation of his innocence.

The priests and Scribes could not but observe that Pilate was favourably disposed towards Jesus : “but,” on that account, “they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching all over Judea, beginning from Galilee,” first, the outskirts of the country and noted for rebellions, and so coming up “to this place:” alluding, perhaps, to his last triumphal entry into the city on Palm Sunday. “And Pilate hearing of Galilee, asked if he were a man of Galilee. And as soon as he perceived that he was of Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also at Jerusalem in those days” on account of the Passover. Pilate was perhaps desirous to rid himself of this unpleasant business with as little displeasure to the Jews as possible ; and probably forwarded to Herod every deposition of the evidence which had been hitherto made relatively to this cause. “Now Herod seeing Jesus was very glad : for he had been desirous a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him, and hoped to see some miracle done by him.” But Jesus, ready and liberal as he was to exert his power in favour of the poor and afflicted, would not gratify the tyrant’s curiosity on this occasion nor do anything to induce him to set him at liberty. He put then many questions to him : “but he answered him nothing,” being perfectly resigned to his Father’s will, and thirsting only for the salvation of the world, which was to be effected by his sufferings and death. “And the chief priests and the Scribes who had followed Jesus, stood by earnestly accusing him. But Herod, with his guard, despised him,” judging, from his silence, that he was unable to answer for himself ; and to show that the idea which he formed of his royalty was more the subject of laughter than of any serious apprehensions, “he with scorn clothed him in a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate,” the people deriding

and hooting at him as he passed along, according to that of the thirty-first Psalm, verse 8: 'All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head.' "And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day; for before they were enemies to one another." This reconciliation of a Pagan with a Jew denoted the reconciliation about to be effected by the blood of Christ between both Jew and Gentile, who were thus to be united into one people and one body; *for he is our peace*, says the Apostle (Eph. ii. 14), *who hath made both one, breaking down the middle wall of partition.*

CHAPTER CXXXIX.

THE JEWS PREFER BARABBAS TO JESUS—HE IS SCOURGED AT THE PILLAR. MATT. XXVII. 15—30. MARK XV. 6—11, 15—19. LUKE XXIII. 13—25. JOHN XVIII. 33—40 AND XIX. 1—16.

As soon as Jesus was brought back to the prætorium, Pilate drew every favourable argument in his power from the two separate examinations which he had undergone; "and calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, he said to them: You have presented to me this man, as one perverting the people, and behold, examining him before you, I find no cause in him as to those things which you lay to his charge: nor hath Herod: for I remitted you to him: and behold, nothing has been done against him, as if he deserved death. When, therefore, I have chastised him, I will release him.

"Now upon the solemn day" of the Passover, "the governor was accustomed, and was obliged to set at liberty one prisoner, whom they should desire to have," in memory of their being delivered on that day from the slavery of Egypt, and the sword of the destroying angel: "and he had

then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas, a robber, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder." Pilate judged this wretch to be extremely suitable to his purpose of liberating Jesus, as he was deservedly held in great horror by the people; and the more so, because in all preceding instances it was a condition generally acknowledged, that the prisoner whose enlargement they solicited ought to have some favourable trait in his character, or some mitigating circumstance in his guilt, to render him a proper object of mercy. "The multitude, therefore, being gathered together, they began to desire" that Pilate would do "as he had ever done to them," and pardon a culprit at their intercession, a favour which they considered as a matter of right. "Pilate saith to them: I find no cause at all in" Jesus. "But you have a custom, that I should release one unto you at the Pass-over: will you, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him up out of envy:" but he never imagined they would carry their resentment so far as to prefer a man guilty of sedition and murder before an innocent person. At the same time it is manifest, that however well-intentioned the measure might have been for rescuing Jesus from an ignominious death, it yet was highly derogatory to him to be indebted for his life to the infamous Barabbas; and no less unjust in Pilate to risk, by this comparison, his being postponed to one who was avowedly branded with the very worst of crimes. "And as he was sitting on the judgment seat his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on his account." This unexpected event more and more confirmed the governor in his former resolution of rescuing Jesus from the bloody designs of his enemies: "but the chief priests and ancients," by their authority and persuasions, "moved the people" to petition "that he would

rather release Barabbas to them, and destroy Jesus ;” representing perhaps his pretended blasphemies and violation of the Mosaic law as much more heinous and dangerous to the nation than the guilt of Barabbas. “And the governor answering, said to them” again : “Whether of the two will you have to be released unto you ? But the whole multitude together cried out, saying : Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. And Pilate again answering, saith to them, desiring to release Jesus : What will you then that I do to the King of the Jews, who is called Christ ? But they again cried out,” callous to all the feelings of tenderness : “Crucify him, crucify him.” Pilate, however, yet persevering in his merciful intention, “said to them the third time : Why, what evil hath this man done ? I find no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go. But they cried out the more, with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified ; and their voices prevailed.”

At this period the fortitude which Pilate had hitherto evinced seemed visibly to give way. He now began to think of employing the third measure which had previously occurred to his mind for diverting the Jews from their sanguinary purpose, but which, for its cruelty, he had not yet thought proper to put in execution. He wished to compound with this stubborn and seditious people, who loudly called out for the immediate execution of Jesus : he offered to concede to them so much of their request as would allow him to retain only that small and miserable portion of life which would remain to him after a most cruel and bloody scourging. To avoid putting him to death, he condemned him to a punishment which, without taking away his life, he judged might be sufficient to satisfy the rage of the Jews. Yet what a most crying injustice ! what cruel pity was this in Pilate, thus to inflict so severe a punishment on the *innocent*, in order to satisfy the furious rage of an infatuated populace ! “Then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him” at a pillar, in the most cruel manner. Of the severity of this punishment

we may form some idea : 1. From the character of those by whom it was inflicted, who being Pagans would show no mercy to Jewish delinquents. 2. From the end or view which the governor proposed to himself by this cruel treatment, which was to soften the barbarous hearts of the Jews towards Jesus, which could not have been effected but by a scourging unusually severe. It therefore became necessary for this purpose to reduce him to a condition truly pitiable, such as might inspire even their stony hearts with compassion. "The soldiers," who attended during this inhuman scene, and were the ministers of it, were not yet satisfied : but afterwards "led him into the court of the palace, and gathered together unto him the whole band," consisting of about 655, "and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand," to make him like a king, as Herod had done. "And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, and began to salute him," by way of his inauguration, "and coming to him, they said : Hail, King of the Jews, and they gave him blows ; and they struck his head with a reed : and they spit on him ; and bowing their knees, they worshipped him." We abhor this cruel barbarity of the Jews, which, however, is imitated by numbers of Christians, who, while they pretend to adore Jesus Christ as their Lord, yet mock at him now reigning in heaven, by violating his most sacred laws, and despising his commandments. "Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and," after this cruel and bloody flagellation of Jesus, "saith to them : Behold I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. (Jesus therefore went forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment), and he saith to them," not doubting but that the sight of so lamentable a spectacle would melt their stony hearts into pity and remorse : "Behold the man !" See this rueful spectacle of suffering innocence, and at length show him some compassion. But this wicked judge reaped not the fruit

which he expected from this barbarous measure. After having so far complied with their sanguinary request as to imbrue his hands in Christ's innocent blood, he was less able to withstand their further attacks. They considered this acquiescence on his part in no other light than as a pledge of his further compliance with their demands. "When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants had seen" Jesus coming forward on the platform, fearing lest so affecting a spectacle should mollify the hardened hearts of the people in his behalf, "they cried out" in a tumultuous manner, "saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him; for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate heard these words, he was more afraid," lest perhaps he should be of the progeny of the gods, as the Romans fancied their heroes to be; for considering the miracles he had wrought, his indifference to life, his invincible patience in sufferings, he might thence be induced to conclude that there was in Jesus some divine quality, which his enemies now wrongfully sought to lay to his charge as a crime of the greatest magnitude. "And he entered into the hall again, and said to Jesus: Whence art thou," that is, of what race, human or divine? "But Jesus gave him no answer," because the question was irrelevant to the accusation brought against him. "Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and that I have power to release thee? Jesus answered: Thou wouldst not have any power at all against me, unless it were given thee from above: therefore he who delivered me to thee hath the greater sin;" thus gently insinuating that Providence had made use of the vices and passions of men to deliver him up into his hands, and though he were more excusable than they on account of his ignorance, yet that he must be accountable for any abuse of his power. "From thenceforth Pilate" gave still more

evident marks that he “sought to release him: but the Jews,” fully sensible of the weak side of the prætor, “cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar’s friend; for every one that maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.” Upon hearing this, the unhappy judge gave way, as if thunderstruck at these fatal words. At once the avowed innocence of Jesus, his own regard for justice, and every other consideration, vanished from before his eyes. His thoughts were engrossed with the dread of the Emperor Tiberius, the most jealous of men, and of the malice of the Jews, who would not fail to accuse him before that prince of having spared the life of one who had declared himself the king of the Jews.

Pilate, however, under this agitation and perplexity of mind, went so far as to make one more effort to save the life of Jesus, which yet proved equally unsuccessful with the former. For, “when he had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called *Lithostrotos*, and in Hebrew Gabbatha: and it was the day of preparation for the Passover, about the sixth hour,” or between eleven and twelve o’clock at noon; “and he saith to the Jews,” in order to awaken in them sentiments of humanity and of love towards their Messiah, then suffering before their eyes in the most pitiable state: “Behold your king,” in the outward garb of the most forlorn and miserable of human beings! Where then is your love for him? Where your compassion for the misery of your fellow-creature? “But they still cried out: Away with him, away with him, crucify him.” We are struck with such unfeeling, barbarous usage: but let us ever bear in mind that it was our sins that cried out still more loudly than the Jews, *Crucify him, crucify him*: since they were, in fact, the true cause of all his sufferings.

“Pilate saith to” these hard-hearted “Jews: Shall I” be guilty of so black a parricide as to “crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar,” thus

renouncing their Messiah, notwithstanding all the wonderful proofs which he had given them of his mission. “And Pilate, seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it:” as if this vain ceremony and verbal declaration were sufficient to clear him, in the sight of the great and just Judge, from the guilt of concurring in the death of the innocent Jesus. “And all the people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children.” (Thus drawing down both upon themselves and their whole nation a malediction, the dreadful effect of which has been, is still, and will be visible to the whole earth, until they shall adore as their God him whom they crucified as the enemy of God.)

“So Pilate,” at length tired out, “and willing to satisfy the people, gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released to them” their precious choice “Barabbas who, for murder and sedition, had been cast into prison, whom they had desired: but Jesus he delivered up to their will, to be crucified;” yet he did not allow a repetition of the scourging, which was always inflicted previously to the execution of a criminal, because Jesus had already undergone the severity of this punishment, executed upon him in the most cruel manner.

Thus ended all the resistance of Pilate, who, instead of bearing in mind that he held in his hands the power of Cæsar to support justice and innocence, now basely sacrificed them both to his own temporal advantage. To defend the innocent Jesus against his declared enemies, he ought to have run every risk of the displeasure of Tiberius and of the rage of the Jewish people, trusting to God for his protection in so good and glorious a cause: since it can never be lawful to do an unjust action, though with a view of procuring the greatest good or of preventing the greatest evils. However, his repeated endeavours to rescue Jesus were not entirely

useless ; for though they did not serve to exculpate Pilate in the sight of God, they evinced at least the innocence of Jesus, and placed it in so clear a light, that even his subsequent condemnation rendered it more conspicuous. It is impossible, indeed, that innocence can ever appear in stronger colours than when the party accused is declared innocent even by the very judge who condemns him to death.

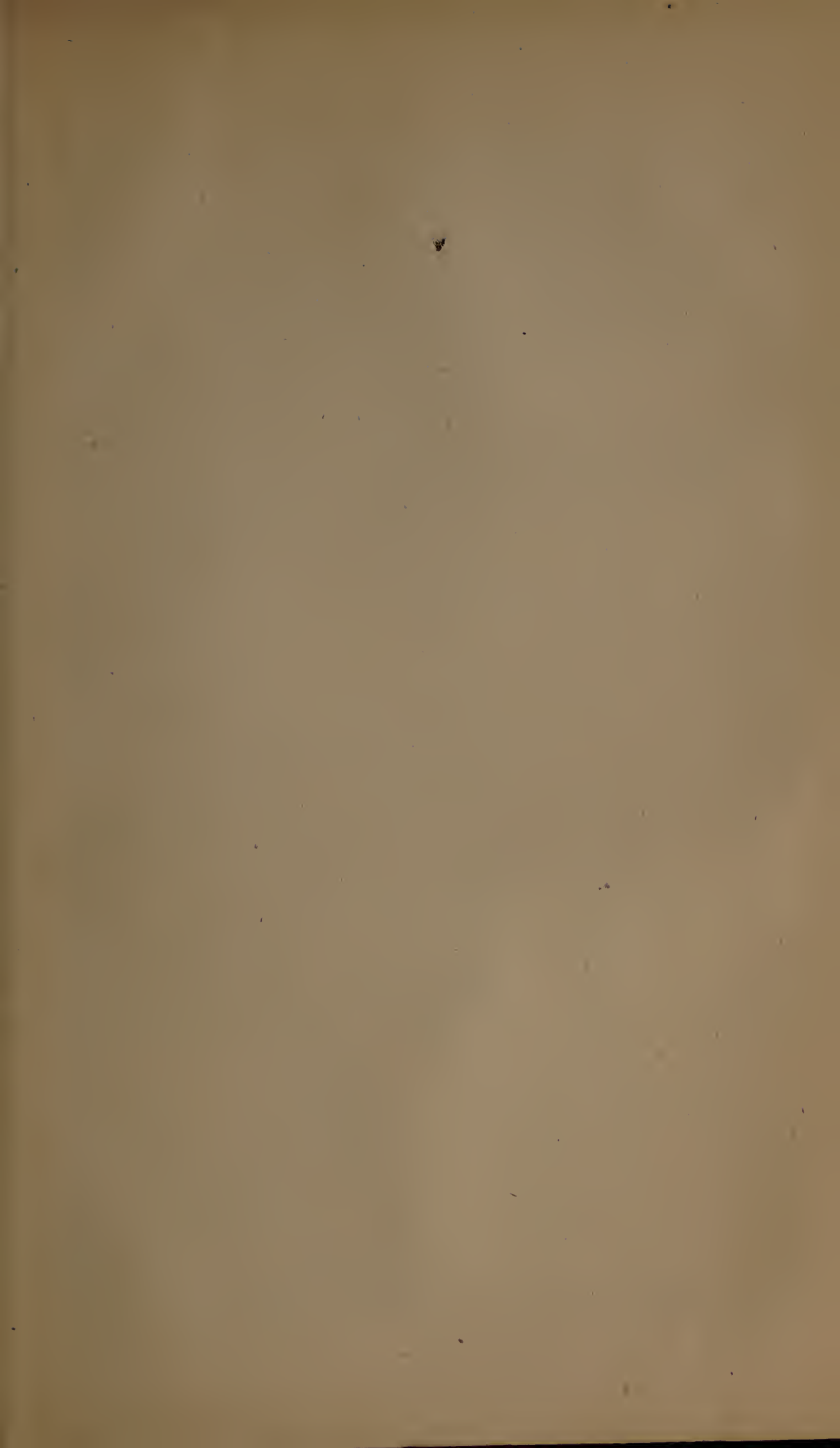
CHAPTER CXL.

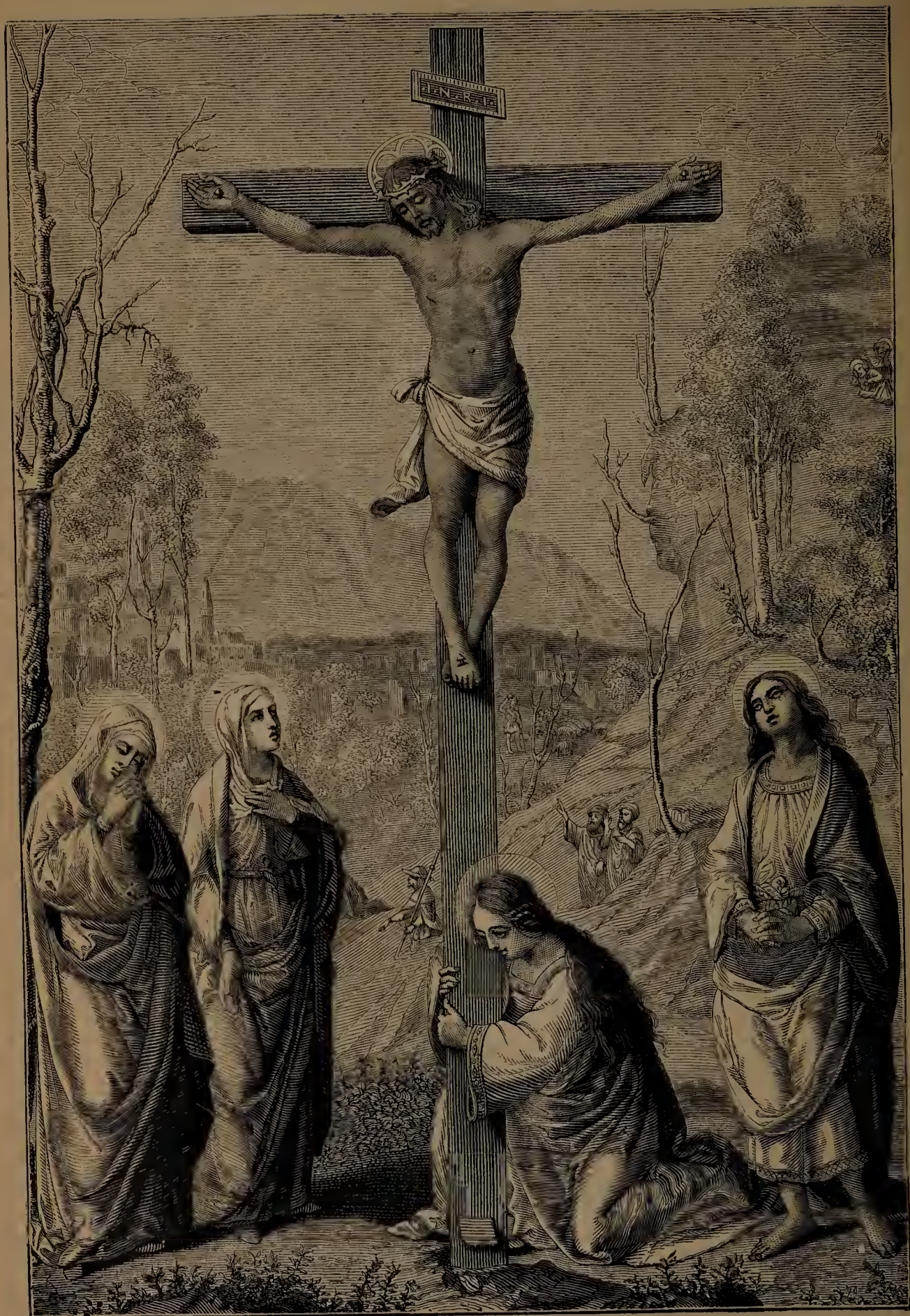
THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS. MATT. XXVII. 27—56. MARK XV. 20—41. LUKE XXIII. 26—49. JOHN XIX. 16—30.

WE have now to consider the sequel of this doleful scene under the two following heads: 1. The sufferings which Jesus underwent on his crucifixion. 2. The ignominies which accompanied his sufferings. The former consisted in carrying his cross, and in being nailed to it ; the latter in his being crucified in a state of nakedness and dereliction ; exposed to the insulting scoffs of all descriptions of persons, viz. Jews, Gentiles, the chief priests, the thieves, and a numerous band of soldiers.

“ And they took Jesus, and after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him,” either with a view to make Jesus more distinguishable in his usual dress, or to establish more indisputably the claim they had to them on his being put to death. “ And bearing his own cross,” that is, the transverse part of it, as was the custom for men condemned to be crucified, “ he went forth to that place which is called Calvary (that is, of skulls, perhaps, says St. Jerome, from the skulls of persons executed and buried there), but in Hebrew Golgotha. “ And as they were leading ” Jesus to execution, his strength failed him, and they were obliged to ease him of his heavy

load. "They found a man of Cyrene," in Lybia, "named Simon, the father of Alexander and of Rufus," afterwards two illustrious Christians, "coming out of the country. Him they forced to take up his cross; and they laid" it "upon him to carry after Jesus:" by which it was signified to all his followers, that he was not to bear his cross alone, but that they also must bear it after him without repining or complaint. "And there followed him" likewise "a great crowd of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented for him" amidst so many stony-hearted Jews, that thirsted only after his blood. Amongst these were probably those Galilean women who had formerly waited on and ministered to him, and his beloved Mary and Martha, whose great affection had doubtless overcome their fears on this occasion to follow their Lord in this his last journey. "And Jesus turning towards them," and knowing the numberless woes impending over his devoted country, "said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep over yourselves and over your children. For behold the day shall come in which it shall be said: Happy they that are barren, and the wombs that bare not, and the breasts that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (that is, if I, who am innocent, and who suffer for the expiation of others' sins, am thus treated, what may impenitent sinners themselves expect to suffer, when they shall be punished according to the rigour of Divine justice?) "And with him were led also two other malefactors to be put to death. And they bring Jesus into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is the place of Calvary," or of skulls, which was out of Jerusalem to the north-west, to show that Jesus Christ was sacrificed for the whole world, and not for the Jews only. "And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh" or gall, thus changing a drink which common pity had provided for the consolation and refreshment of con-





THE CRUCIFIXION.

demned persons into a nauseous bitterness not to be endured ; “ and when he had tasted he would not drink,” being determined to submit to the death of the cross, without any alleviation of its pains, and without shrinking from any part of its horrors. “ There they crucified him, and with him two others, robbers, one on the right, and the other on the left, and Jesus in the midst,” as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three. “ And ” thus “ the scripture was fulfilled which saith : And with the wicked he was reputed. And Jesus said : Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do ; ” thus teaching us, by his example, to love our greatest enemies, and to do good to them that hate and persecute us. “ Pilate wrote also an inscription,” in great legible characters, according to the custom of the Romans, “ and put it upon the cross ” of Jesus, “ over his head,” denoting his name, his country, and the cause for which he suffered. “ And it was written, *Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews* ; ” it being the *Divine pleasure* that, without any of their false glosses, it should now be published to their shame who he was, and how unjustly betrayed by them, viz. the only Son of the King of heaven, Jesus their Messiah, sent with the gospel of everlasting happiness and peace, to reign over them for ever ; and by them thus deserted, rejected, and crucified. “ This inscription many of the Jews read ; because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city,” and distant only about 250 paces : “ and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin,” that, in the great concourse of strangers from all parts to the paschal solemnity, it might be understood by them all. “ The chief priests, therefore, of the Jews,” resenting this title, which in plain terms affirmed Jesus to be their king, and consequently themselves to be his betrayers and crucifiers, “ said to Pilate : Write not the king of the Jews ; but that he said : I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered,” somewhat sullenly : “ What I have written, I have written,” and so it must stand.

“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments (of which they made four parts, to every soldier a part), and also his coat; casting lots upon them, what every man should take. Now the coat was without seam, woven all over,” and therefore they considered that it could not be divided without rendering it useless. “They said therefore one to another: Let us not cut it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They parted my garments among them: and upon my vesture they have cast lots (Ps. xxii. 18). And the soldiers indeed did these things, and” then “sat down” on the ground, “and watched him,” either to prevent any attempt for rescuing Jesus from the cross, or perhaps to hinder the Jews from tearing away the inscription or title which had been affixed to it.

“And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Observe their blindness thus to reproach him with that very crime which they themselves were actually perpetrating against his person. “Now the people stood looking on, and the rulers with them: in like manner also the chief priests, with the Scribes and ancients, mocking, said one to another: He saved others: himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God: let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe: he trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he is pleased with him; for he said: I am the Son of God. And the soldiers also made sport with him, coming and offering him vinegar; and saying: If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And the self-same thing the thieves also that were crucified with him, reproached him. And one of these robbers blasphemed him, saying: If thou

be Christ save thyself and us." The blasphemy consisted either in his concluding that he was not the Christ, from the low state to which he saw him now reduced, or rather in taxing him if he were really the Christ or the Messiah, and the Son of God, with an extreme folly and weakness of mind, to allow himself to be thus fastened to the cross. "But the other," on the right hand of Christ, whose heart God had touched, amidst so many blasphemies, to glorify and confess our Lord, "answering, rebuked him, and said: Neither dost thou fear God" any more than the others, blaspheming in a similar manner him whom they blaspheme: but "seeing thou art under the same condemnation" as he is, thou oughtest therefore to be the more compassionate to his sufferings, as thou must be sensible of the grievousness of thy own. Moreover, in this similarity of punishment, there exists an infinite difference betwixt the cause of his sufferings and ours. "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus," as it were to atone for the blasphemies of his companion: "Lord, remember me," the companion of thy cross, and thy fellow-sufferer, "when thou shalt come into thy kingdom." These words display, first, a consummate charity and love of Jesus, together with an intrepid zeal in maintaining his cause at a time when his enemies were venting their rage against him, and when he was deserted even by his friends. "And Jesus," in reward of this his heroic profession of faith, said "to him: Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise;" that is, in a place of rest and happiness with the souls of the just; hereby granting him a full discharge from all his sins, both as to their guilt and punishment, and ensuring to him, immediately after death, the happy society of the saints, whose limbo was now made a paradise by our Lord's going there. Thus did Jesus from his cross, as from his tribunal, begin to act the part of a just judge towards these two criminals, by absolving the one on account of his faith and

repentance, and by condemning the other for his blasphemy and impenitence.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother,” who had followed him from Jerusalem, experiencing now the truth of what Simeon had foretold, viz. that a sword of grief should pierce her heart. Yet in her extreme affliction she gave proof of a courage truly worthy of the mother of a Man-God, being fearless of danger amidst the insults of a tumultuous mob. There was present likewise “her sister Mary,” spouse “of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus, therefore, had seen his mother, and the disciple” John “standing by, whom he loved, he saith to his mother,” compassionating her sorrow: “Woman, behold thy son.” Oh! what an exchange, cries out St. Bernard, John is substituted in the place of Jesus, the servant in the place of his Lord, the disciple in the place of the Master, the son of Zebedee in the place of the Son of God. “After that he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that time the disciple took her to his own” home, and treated her with all that dutiful attention which is due from a son to his mother. This mutual exchange, however disproportioned in regard of Mary, was extremely honourable to John, and a well-deserved reward of his courage and fidelity. For when all his brethren fled away, or hid themselves through fear, he alone seems to have had the courage to show himself near the cross with the blessed mother of Jesus, and to have remained there till he saw him give up the ghost.

“And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth, till the ninth hour,” that is, from mid-day till three o’clock. “And the sun,” sympathizing as it were with its Lord, and covering its face at such a horrid parricide, “was darkened,” at a time when incapable of any natural eclipse, the moon being now at the full, and at its greatest distance: “and about the ninth hour,” or three o’clock in the afternoon, “Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My

God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the beginning of the 21st Psalm, and Jesus, by speaking these words aloud, would show to the world that the whole Psalm is prophetic of him, which will indeed appear sufficiently manifest, if we consider how exactly he verified every part of it by his actions and sufferings. "And some of them that stood there, and heard these words, said: This man calleth for Elias," judging so from the similitude of the word Eloi; for they did not understand Hebrew.

"Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture may be fulfilled, he saith: I thirst," which was the natural effect of the almost entire effusion of his sacred blood, and of the extreme violence of his torture. "Now there stood a vessel with vinegar, and immediately one of them running, took a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed," which St. John calls a stalk of hyssop, "and gave him to drink," as a restorative to his faintness, or to revive his almost exhausted vital spirits; "saying: Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down: and the others said" in like manner. "When Jesus therefore had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated," all the prophecies relating to my life and death are now fulfilled; "and again crying with a loud voice," such as evinced to the world that he died through love towards mankind, and not through a failure of the powers of nature, "he said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and saying these words, and bowing down his head, he gave up the ghost."

"And behold," at the same moment, "the" inner "veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom," to show that all the former typical ceremonies of the Mosaical law were at an end, and that the road to heaven, the true sanctuary, which, since the transgression of our forefather Adam, had been shut, was now again open to mankind; "and the earth quaked," as if to express its horror of the crime committed in the crucifixion of its Lord

and Master ; “ and the rocks were rent,” as it were through grief at the horrid scene, particularly that of Mount Calvary, where our Lord suffered ; the cleft of which, as travellers inform us, may be seen at this day. “ And the graves were opened,” as it were, to show that death was now destroyed by the death of Jesus, and that his death was now become the principle of life, in token of which “ many bodies of saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing what was done,” and that Jesus had given up the ghost, crying out in this manner, which was extremely different from that of persons crucified, whose voice and strength fail them by degrees through loss of blood, until at length they expire, as if swooning away ; reflecting, I say, upon all these circumstances, he “ glorified God, saying ” to all present, “ Truly this was a just man : indeed this man was the Son of God. And they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying : Indeed this man was the Son of God. And all the multitude of those who were present at this spectacle (the chief priests are not mentioned), and saw the things that happened, returned knocking their breasts,” through sorrow and regret for the horrid deed in which they had concurred. “ And all his acquaintance stood at a distance, and ” so did “ the women that had followed him from Galilee, beholding these things. Amongst whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee, who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, ministering to him ; and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem, accompanied him on this mournful occasion, though their names are not recorded in the gospel.

CHAPTER CXLI.

THE SIDE OF JESUS IS OPENED WITH A SPEAR. JOHN XIX. 31
 —37. HE IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHRE. MATT. XXVII. 57
 —66. MARK XV. 42—46. LUKE XXIII. 50—56. JOHN
 XIX. 38—42.

“THE Jews then (because it was the day of preparation), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath (for,” on account of the Passover, “that was a most solemn Sabbath-day), desired Pilate that their legs might be broken” in order to hasten their death, “that” afterwards “they might be taken away.” They were in this actuated by the idea that the sanctity and joy of the day would be sullied and damped by the doleful sight of human bodies hanging upon the cross, which was likewise strictly forbidden in Deut. xxi. 22, where it is enjoined that the bodies of executed criminals shall not remain all night on the cross, but shall be buried on the very day of their execution, before sunset. “The soldiers, therefore, came: and they broke the legs of the first, and also of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs,” as it would have been to no purpose. “But one of the soldiers” wantonly “opened his” right “side with a spear, and presently there came blood and water” in two distinct streams; for otherwise, by reason of the strong tincture of blood, the water would not have been discerned, if mingled with it. This circumstance we can view in no other light than as a miracle, it being certain that in all dead bodies the blood speedily congeals or coagulates after death, neither is the humour nor liquid contained in the pericardium like to natural water, either in colour or taste. These two circumstances of the water and blood may likewise be considered as mysterious; inasmuch as they lively represent the two sacraments left by our Lord to his Church, for the cleansing

of sin, and the commemoration of his death. These are the sacrament of baptism, by which we are regenerated to the life of grace, and the sacrament of the Eucharist, which affords nourishment suitable to that life which we receive in baptism. In this sense, therefore, we may say, that as Eve was formed out of Adam's side when lying asleep, so by the water and blood issuing from the side of Christ, lying in the sleep of death, was formed in these two sacraments, his spouse, the Catholic Church : she is regenerated in the one by Christ's spirit, and nourished in the other with his grace ; she is redeemed by the shedding of blood, and cleansed by the water of baptism.

Hence St. John, a spectator and diligent observer of all that passed, takes particular notice of this miracle, and establishes the truth of it by the testimony of his own eyes, and the most thorough conviction of its reality in these words : " And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe." He further confirms it from the coincidence or agreement of this event with the prophecies which foretold that the executioners should pierce his sacred body, but not break a bone. " For these were done," says St. John, " that the scripture might be fulfilled : *You shall not break a bone of him* " (Exod. xii. 46), which was spoken indeed of the paschal lamb, but which prefigured that the bones of Jesus, the true lamb of God, should not be broken upon the cross : " and again another scripture sayeth : *They shall look on him whom they pierced* " (Zachary xii. 10).

" When evening was come (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath), there came a certain rich man named Joseph, a noble counsellor, and a good and just man (the same had given no consent to their counsels and proceedings) ; he was of Arimathea, a city of Judea, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man," therefore, though heretofore too timorous in declaring for Christ, " went in boldly to Pilate, and (being a disciple of

Jesus, but in private for fear of the Jews) begged the body of Jesus, desiring Pilate that he might take it away. But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead :” for it not unfrequently happened that persons crucified lived full two days upon the cross. “ And sending for the centurion,” from the fortress Antonio, “ he asked him if he were already dead ; and when he had understood it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph,” not refusing him a decent burial, whom he had always esteemed an innocent person. “ And ” therefore “ he commanded that it should be delivered. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus.” For the greater honour of our Lord’s funeral, “ there came also Nicodemus, he that had come to Jesus by night at first,” and who had likewise spoken in his defence in the council, “ bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. And Joseph buying fine linen, and taking him down, wrapped him up in a clean linen cloth. They took therefore the body, and bound it in linen cloths with spices, as it is the custom of the Jews to bury.” In this office we may imagine these great persons were assisted by the blessed mother of our Lord and by St. John, who relates this more in detail than the other Evangelists. “ And there was in the place, where he was crucified, a garden : and in the garden a new monument, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, by reason of the day of preparation among the Jews,” Joseph, attended by this small train of mourners, “ laid it in his own new monument hard by, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument,” to prevent any violation of the place or of the body, and likewise to secure the costly linen clothes and spices that had been bestowed upon it, “ and ” then “ went his way. And that was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women that had come with him from Galilee, following after,” viz. “ Mary Magdalen and the other Mary,” were “ sitting over against the sepulchre,” and when Joseph and Nicodemus came forth

from it, previous to their rolling the great stone, they entered in, and “saw the monument, and how his body was laid. And returning, they prepared perfumes and ointments: and they rested on the Sabbath according to the precept” of the law.

In the recital of these various circumstances we observe so many striking proofs of the death of Jesus, that it is placed beyond the possibility of a doubt, and therefore we do not find that it was ever called in question by any of the unbelieving Jews. As to his resurrection, the proofs of it also begin to appear. 1. From the shape and structure of this monument: for it was so disposed by Divine Providence that this should be hewn out of the solid rock, lest otherwise there should have been grounds for supposing the body of Jesus to have been stolen away, either by undermining the foundations, by perforating the walls, or by opening the roof, all which must have been humanly impossible in a place of this description. It was further so disposed by Divine Providence that this monument should never have been used before, and therefore as the body of Christ was the first placed there, this circumstance precluded the possibility of any other body's being mistaken for his, as might have been pretended in case other bodies had been entombed in the same monument.

The second proof of the resurrection of Jesus arises from the extraordinary precautions which his declared enemies employed on this occasion. He had so repeatedly foretold to his disciples his future resurrection, and it had, in so many instances, been the subject of conversation, that the particulars of so interesting a prediction had at length reached the ears of his adversaries the high priests and Pharisees, and now recurred to their minds in the most striking manner, at a time when the disciples themselves had lost all recollection of them. Accordingly they resolved to lose no time in taking proper measures, “and the next day which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests

and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." This was the plea which the Pharisees held forth to Pilate for his granting their request: but nothing, in fact, could be more frivolous. For what interest could the disciples have in establishing the glory and immortality of one, by whom they themselves would have been grossly deceived? On the contrary, as they had hitherto exposed themselves to the hatred of the whole nation upon his account, it was very natural, after being thus imposed upon themselves, that, instead of supporting his interest any longer, they should now give him up, and declare to the magistrates that he was an impostor,—a testimony which the whole synagogue would have received with general applause, and which would have gained the affection and esteem of the people; whereas by publishing his resurrection they had nothing to look for but the most rigorous torments, persecutions, and death itself.

Wherefore the real motive which influenced the high priests on this occasion was probably the apprehension lest this prediction of Christ's resurrection should actually be verified. It is true, they had no idea but of a temporary, passing resurrection, like to that of Lazarus, which they had witnessed: yet they judged that a possible event of this nature might be attended with the most serious consequences. Hence it is highly probable that they gave on this occasion their own most express and particular injunctions to the soldiers, to put Jesus to death by all means, and to secure his body in the monument in case he should make any attempt to escape from their custody. Wherefore, upon their petitioning for an armed force, "Pilate said to them: You have a guard: go, guard it, as you know. And they

departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone" at the entrance of the monument with the public seal of the government, "and setting guards" at the vestibule, with proper instructions for their conduct. It was impossible for the Pharisees to adopt measures better calculated to establish the certainty of Jesus's resurrection beyond the reach of all suspicion. And so, by Divine Providence, were all their precautions turned against themselves, and served to render the resurrection of our Lord much more certain, since this very guard became the first witnesses of it, and announced it to the high priests themselves; thus precluding every pretence, which otherwise they might have had, of saying that his body had been stolen away.

But whilst our blessed Lord's body was now at rest in the sepulchre, his glorious soul, which was never separated from the Deity, and was now attended on by multitudes of angels, descended into hell, and the lower parts of the earth and of his kingdom, in order, as the triumphant conqueror over the powers of darkness, to announce comfort and deliverance to such imprisoned souls as were capable of the mercy and favours of his passion, according to that of the prophet Zachary ix. 11. *Thou also, by the blood of thy testament, hath sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*

CHAPTER CXLII.

THE HISTORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. MATT. XXVIII. 1—15. MARK XVI. 1—10. LUKE XXIV. 1—11. JOHN XX. 1—18.

"IN the night of the Sabbath, towards the dawning on the first day of the week," which corresponds to our Sunday, "Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, brought perfumes, that coming they might anoint Jesus;" for the Sabbath had obliged them to leave the

embalming of his body imperfect on the Friday. “And very early in the morning” they set out, “it being yet dark,” and “they come to the monument, the sun being now risen, bringing the perfumes they had prepared : and they said one to another : Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the monument ?” They were not aware, it seems, of its being secured by the public seal, and guarded by a band of soldiers. They were on the road, when “behold there was a great earthquake,” as there had been before at our Lord’s death. “For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.” But, according to the holy fathers, our Lord’s glorious body had already passed through the monument, when yet shut up and sealed. “And the aspect” of the angel “was as lightning, and his apparel” white “as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as if they had been dead.” However, the angel spared the lives of the soldiers, in order that they might vouch for the truth of what they had seen. In fact, their death would have given the Jews a specious pretext for asserting that the disciples of Jesus had surprised the guards while asleep, and, after having massacred them in that defenceless state, had stolen away the body without opposition. In the mean time the women were approaching, “and looking saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great.” To them, however, the angel who sat thereon was perfectly invisible ; “and entering into the sepulchre, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Mary Magdalen ran therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple,” John, “whom Jesus loved, and saith to them : They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple,” being younger, “did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying” decently wrapped up, “but

yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths" (the only prey a robber would have looked after) "lying, and the napkin, that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place;" that is, folded up as it had been when upon our Lord's head. "Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw" that Jesus was not there, "and" so "believed," as Magdalen had conjectured, that his body had been taken away. "For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. These disciples therefore went away again to their home," Peter "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre: and she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid," as if paying a particular reverence to the very place where his sacred body had been deposited. "They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She," taking them for strangers, "saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. When she had said this, she turned herself back," and went into the other parts of the garden, there to extend her eager researches, whilst the other women remained near to the monument. "But" Jesus "being risen early, the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils, and she saw Jesus standing: and" yet "knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking it was the gardener, saith to him," under the idea that he might have thrown out the body of one executed as a public criminal: "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Upon his making no reply, she turned away from him, as she had done from the two angels. "Jesus," overcome as

it were with tenderness, "saith to her: Mary. She turning," and ravished with joy, "saith to him: Rabboni (which is to say Master,)" is it you, my dear Lord? and then probably fell prostrate to adore him, and kiss his feet. "Jesus saith to her: Touch me not," that is, thou needest not hang about me at present in this earnest manner, as if thou wert never to see me more: for I have not yet ascended to my Father," and so thou wilt have time enough to testify thy love for me: "but go to my brethren" (for so he now styles his disciples), "and say to them: I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" thus banishing from their minds the conceit of any temporal sceptre, and raising them to a celestial throne above. "Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples that had been with him," and "were" now "mourning and weeping: I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me. And they hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe," tacitly accusing her of taking a phantom for a reality.

"And it came to pass, as" the other women, who had re-entered into the vestibule of the monument, "were astonished in their mind at this, behold two men stood by them in shining apparel, and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the ground," the angels "said to them: Why seek you him who is living among the dead? He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Remember how he spoke to you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying: that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid; and going quickly, tell his disciples, and" especially "Peter, that he is risen: and behold he goeth before you into Galilee. Then you shall see him, as he told you. Behold I have foretold it to you." This injunction comprised all the disciples, who being then more than five hundred in number, could not have assembled in Judea, almost under the eyes of the chief

priests, without giving umbrage to Pilate, who would not fail to consider so numerous a concourse as a proof of the existence of some dangerous plot against the established government. With a view, therefore, to the safety of his disciples, Jesus was pleased to appoint Galilee as the place of giving them a personal meeting. "And they called to mind his words. And they went quickly out of the monument with fear and great joy, running to tell his disciples, and they said nothing to any man" in the way; "for they were afraid."

"And behold Jesus met them, saying: Hail, and they came near, and took hold of his feet, and adored him" with the most profound reverence. "Then Jesus saith to them: Be not afraid. Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see me. And being returned from the monument, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest" of the disciples. "Now it was Mary Magdalen and Joanna," who was wife to Chusa, Herod's steward, "and Mary" the mother "of James, and the others, who were with them, that told these things to the Apostles, and these words seemed to them as an idle fancy, and they did not believe them." Although the testimony here given by these pious women might have been excepted against by the Jews, on account of their sex, which is usually taxed with credulity and weakness of mind, as also on account of their known affection and attachment to Jesus, yet it was entitled to belief on the part of the Apostles. However, the indifferent, or rather the harsh reception which their deposition met with from the Apostles, ultimately vouched in favour of the truth. For in proportion as the Apostles were backward in surrendering their belief, on the strength of the evidence in question, in an equal degree were they decided and confirmed in opinion afterwards, when, being ultimately convinced of the resurrection of Jesus, they boldly, and without fear, announced it to the Jews, and to all nations of the earth, even at the hazard of their lives.

“When” the women “were gone, behold some of the guards,” who had probably retired to some place for a while to consult what to say, and how to act on the occasion, “came into the city, and related to the chief priests all that had happened. And they being assembled with the elders, having consulted together, gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Do you give out that his disciples came in the night, and stole him away, while we were asleep. And if this be heard by the governor, we will pacify him, and make you secure,” for it was no less than death for a soldier to allow himself to be overcome by sleep when on guard. “So they having taken the money, did as they were instructed, and this report has been spread abroad,” and still prevails “amongst the Jews, even until this day.” But what can be more inconsistent than such a story, or more improbable in all its circumstances?

For, 1. If the guards were asleep, what could they see in that state? if they could see nothing, what could they vouch for? 2. Through what aperture could the disciples steal away the sacred body of Jesus? To the monument no other access could be had but through the door, which was guarded by the soldiers: in every other direction it was an impenetrable rock: how could they convey it away through the door, without awakening the soldiers by the unavoidable noise which they must have occasioned, as well by removing the immense stone as by carrying off the body? 3. How extremely improbable is it that the disciples, who were, at that very time, so cowardly and timorous, should attempt an undertaking of this kind, to their own certain ruin if detected, and without hopes of advantage if it could have succeeded? Again, did the poor disciples conduct themselves as authors of such a plot would certainly have done? Artless in their words and actions, they took no precautions whatever. As persons conscious of no fraud or guile, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more after the report of their having stolen their Master's body was spread

over the city; and, in about a month after, returned thither again, boldly asserting to the face of their powerful enemies, that *God had raised from the dead that same Jesus whom they had crucified*. The learned doctors and priests of the Jews, the jealous guardians of their church and state, heard this without laying to their charge the theft of their Master's body, which they would certainly have done if they had believed it true. This account of Christ's resurrection is indeed given by the Apostles and disciples, but it is contradicted by none: it is confirmed by miracles acknowledged both by Jews and Pagans, and by the progress which Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem; which alone is a sufficient demonstration that no proof of any cheat was or could be produced. All possibility of an imposture is further banished by the sincerity and sanctity of the Apostles and disciples, which appear in their writings and in their whole conduct; also by the miraculous change wrought in them by the Holy Ghost, by which they, who were before so timorous, "gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the greatest courage;" confirming this testimony during their whole lives, amidst all threats, dangers, and hardships, and sealing it, at their death, with their blood. Could one, much more could so many witnesses, have all maintained this point with so much constancy, and even with the loss of their lives, had it been a known cheat? Especially if we consider that riches and honours would have been their certain recompense had they made known to the Pharisees an imposture of this kind.

CHAPTER CXLIII.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH APPARITION OF JESUS. MARK XVI.
12, 13. LUKE XXIV. 13—35.

"AFTER that" Jesus "showed himself in another shape to two of them walking the same day to a town called Emmaus,

which was sixty furlongs," that is, about two miles, "from Jerusalem" to the west. "And they were talking together of all these things that had happened" in regard to Jesus. "And it came to pass, as they were talking and reasoning together, Jesus himself coming up, went along with them. But their eyes were hindered," by a divine power, "that they should not know him. And he said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleophas" (and who was the reputed uncle of Christ, being St. Joseph's brother, and father of St. Simeon, St. James the Less, St. Jude, and Joseph or Joses), "answering, said to him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? And he said to them: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in work and word, before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel," as he promised, and as his miracles gave room to conclude. "And now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done," and there is no appearance of him. "Moreover, some women also of our company have terrified us, who, before it was light, were at the monument, and not finding his body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it as the women had said; but him they found not."

After having patiently listened to the two disciples, who had in this manner accounted for their incredulity concerning his resurrection, Jesus "then said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ," according to the Scriptures, "to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that

were concerning him," viz. how all the legal sacrifices were only types of the oblation of the Messiah, and of the expiation of sin by his blood. He probably brought to their recollection Abraham offering his son Isaac as a representation of the only Son of God being offered up by his eternal Father, besides many other types of him, as the paschal lamb, the brazen serpent which Moses raised up in the desert, that all who looked with faith upon it might be healed; Jonas lying three days in the whale's belly, and afterwards cast on shore. To these he might add the descriptions of his passion to be found in Isaiah, and the 21st Psalm, and likewise in other places; for, in fact, the whole history and all the prophecies of the Old Testament chiefly prefigured and represented the great mystery of man's redemption, as effected by the labours and sufferings of the Son of God. Whilst Christ was thus instructing them, "they drew near to the town whither they were going; and he made a show to go further," and would certainly have done so, had they not hindered him by their affectionate importunity. "But they constrained him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent, and he went in with them. And it came to pass, while he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave it to them;" this many of the ancients understand of the blessed Eucharist, which he distributed to them under one kind alone. "And their eyes were opened," probably by a virtue attached to these sacred mysteries, "and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said to each other: Was not our heart burning within us whilst he was speaking to us in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"

By his thus instantly disappearing, they concluded it to be his intention that they should go and communicate the happy tidings of his resurrection to his disconsolate brethren; "and rising up the same hour, they returned back to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed,

and hath appeared to Simon :” but neither the time nor the particulars of this appearance to Peter are recorded by the Evangelists. However, the Apostles, as Mr. West observes, seem to have laid a greater stress upon it than upon all those related by the women. Cleophas and his companion then related their story, “and they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew him in the breaking of bread. But “neither did they” still “give credit to them,” notwithstanding this accumulated evidence of Christ’s resurrection ; which we are only to understand of some of the disciples who, from our Lord’s presently vanishing from the women, from St. Peter, and lastly from these two at Emmaus, concluded that it was only some spirit appearing in his likeness. The same idea they seem also to have had when our Lord appeared to themselves (Luke xxiv. 37).

CHAPTER CXLIV.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH APPARITIONS OF JESUS TO THE ELEVEN. MARK XVI. 14. LUKE XXIV. 36—43. JOHN XX. 19—31.

THE next proof of the resurrection of Jesus arises from his appearing to the Apostles assembled together, and here we find the necessary conditions for pronouncing it decisive. “Now whilst they were speaking,” and debating “these things at length,” that is, late that same day, “the first of the week, he appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and the doors shut,” and fast locked, “for fear of the Jews.” On this occasion “Jesus came and stood in the midst” of them, “and said to them : Peace be to you,” (the usual and ancient salutation of the Jews). “It is I, fear not : and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he had risen again. But they being

troubled and affrighted, supposed that they saw a spirit ;” doubtless from the idea that no corporeal being could have access to them, shut up as they were in a private chamber. “ And he said to them : Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me and see : for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet,” with the marks of the nails which had fastened him to the cross, “ and his side ” that had been pierced. “ The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. But while they yet believed not ” with an entire conviction, “ and wondered for joy,” their minds fluctuating with different sensations of mistrust, of admiration, and of joy, “ he said : “ Have you here anything to eat ? And they offered him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honey-comb. And when he had eaten before them, taking the remains, he gave to them,” as a further proof of his having eaten some of it.

As by their incredulous disposition they had rejected the peace which he first imparted to them, “ he ” now “ said to them again : Peace be unto you. As my Father sent me ” to labour for the salvation of men, “ I also send you ” for the same end, and authorise you to witness the things you have seen and heard from me. “ When he had said this, he breathed upon them ” with his most sacred mouth, which was a figure of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds by way of inspiration, “ and he said to them ” the following words, which have ever since been used by the Church in the ordination of her ministers : “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” At his last supper, four days before, he had given to his Apostles and their successors the power of consecrating his body and blood in the sacrament of the holy Eucharist ; and here he gave them power to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance, and thereby completed their sacerdotal character. “ But

Thomas, who is called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came ;” yet he doubtless received the like power of forgiving sins either at this time or afterwards. “The other disciples, therefore, said to him,” on his return: “We have seen the Lord.” He immediately asked if they had actually touched him, so as to be certain of its being no imaginary phantom, and “he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” These conditions were certainly highly unreasonable on the part of Thomas: for what could be more absurd than not only to refuse to believe a fact on the testimony of others, but also to require the evidence both of the sight and touch? However, it pleased our blessed Saviour to satisfy this incredulous disciple, by affording him both an ocular and manual proof of the truth; and this, according to St. Austin, was one of the reasons why he chose to retain the marks of his sacred wounds. Wherefore, “after eight days,” when “his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them, Jesus cometh, the door being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you. Then he saith to Thomas,” with a most gracious condescendence to his weakness: “Put in thy finger hither, and view my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side, and be not incredulous but faithful. Thomas,” who was doubtless much confounded at such an appearance, and now by Divine grace more than convinced of his error, “answered and said to him: My Lord and my God;” thus acknowledging more than these scars evidenced to him, not only the resurrection of his true body, but the divinity of his person which effected it. “Jesus said to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; happy they who have not seen, and have believed,” because they shall receive a recompense proportioned to the merit of their faith, which consists in believing what we do not see. Jesus here alluded not to

the other Apostles, who, in this respect, greatly resembled Thomas, but to all those who in future ages should, by means of their preaching, believe in him, without having seen him personally as the Apostles. "Jesus did likewise many other miracles in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God," foretold by the prophets, "and that believing you may have life in his name," the life of grace here, and eternal life hereafter in heaven.

After the above manifestation we find no scruple or difficulty left in the minds of any of the Apostles; and Almighty God permitted their former incredulity to furnish additional proofs of the resurrection of Jesus, and to establish its belief more effectually in the hearts of all mankind. In reality, all possible doubts on this subject, all objections which can be raised against it, have been here anticipated by the Apostles, who, in our stead, experienced all those difficulties which we could have felt. Nothing, therefore, can be more equitable than that we should own ourselves convinced of the truth of the resurrection, in as perfect a manner as the Apostles did, and that under the weight of their authority we should believe those mysteries which they believed not until convinced by the most unexceptionable evidence.

CHAPTER CXLV.

THE SEVENTH APPARITION OF JESUS, VIZ. BY THE SEA-SIDE.
JOHN XXI.

"AFTERWARDS Jesus showed himself again to his disciples, near the Lake of Tiberias, and he manifested himself after this manner. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathaniel who was of Cana of

Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples," in all seven. These two last some expositors conjecture to have been St. Andrew, Peter's brother, and St. Philip, his fellow townsman. "Simon Peter saith to them : I am going a fishing. They reply : We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the ship, and that night they took nothing. Now when it was morning, Jesus stood on the shore," as it had happened before to Peter, at our Lord's first calling him from his trade : "yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus then said to them : Young men, have you anything to eat ?" as if intending to buy some fish of them. "They answered him : No. He saith to them : Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find. They cast therefore ; and now they were not able to draw it, by reason of the multitude of fishes," which was an earnest of their future success in fishing after men. "The disciple then, whom Jesus loved, saith to Peter : It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he had heard that it was the Lord, girded his vest about him (for he was stripped), and cast himself into the sea," moved by an extraordinary fervour and love for his Master. "But the other disciples came in the boat (for they were not far from the land, but only about 200 cubits) drawing the net with the fishes. As soon then as they came to land, they saw coals burning, and a fish laid thereon, and bread," all miraculously provided by Christ for their refreshment. "Jesus saith to them : Bring hither of the fishes you have now caught," viz. make such addition as is necessary to what is already prepared, since this is designed merely to allay the first cravings of your hunger, and will not afford a sufficient meal for seven persons.

In obedience to the commands of Jesus, "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And though there was so great a quantity, the net was not broken. Jesus saith to them : Come and dine," since your long fatigue during the night

must have rendered refreshment extremely necessary to you.

They sat down on the ground for that purpose, "and none of those that were eating durst ask him: Who art thou?" It is probable that he appeared to them with a countenance different and brighter than before his death, and more full of majesty; yet "knowing that it was the Lord," by his features and voice, they were ashamed to ask or doubt of it. "And Jesus cometh and taketh bread, and giveth it to them, and fish in like manner. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples," in any numerous assembly of them, "after he had risen from the dead," the first being on the day of his resurrection; the second eight days afterwards.

"When, therefore, they had dined, Jesus," whose usual manner was to transfer the discourse to spiritual matters, "saith to Simon Peter: Simon, the son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He" modestly "answered: Yes, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee," declining to compare himself with others: "he saith to him: Feed my lambs," as I the chief pastor am now quitting the world. "He saith to him again: Simon, the son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him a third time," that he might, as it were, reverse and atone for his three former denials by a threefold confession of his affection: Simon, the son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was troubled, because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?" For it seemed as if he suspected the sincerity of his former protestations. "And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things," and all hearts, "thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my sheep," hereby showing that all his flock, both lambs and sheep, young and old, people and their pastors, were committed to his government and jurisdiction. Jesus conferred not this post of eminence and of important trust upon Peter in a clandestine manner, but in the pre-

sence of several witnesses, and even of his principal Apostles; that all they who had been scandalized by his fall, might now be no less edified by his confession, and might see that his former appointment to the primacy of the Church was not invalidated by his subsequent prevarication, but was now confirmed and established in the most public and authentic manner.

After our Lord had thus confirmed Peter as the chief steward and servant of his household, he was pleased to acquaint him also with what trials he was afterwards to undergo for his sake, that so he might be the better prepared for his future martyrdom. Wherefore he thus proceeded: "Amen, amen I say unto thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird, and didst walk where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said signifying by what death he should glorify God," viz. by the death of the cross, which accordingly happened in the thirteenth year of Nero, and before St. John wrote his gospel. "And when" Jesus "had spoke this," he arose from the place where he was seated, and to exhort Peter to aim at the realising of the great love which he had expressed, "he saith to him: Follow me," that is, follow the example I have given to thee, since henceforth thou wilt have to tread in my footsteps. "Peter," therefore, accompanied our Lord walking on the shore, and "turning saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also, at the supper, leaned on his breast, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? Him, therefore, when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: And what will become of this man?" being anxious to know what was to happen to his friend. "Jesus saith to him," repressing his curiosity: "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?" It is thy duty and concern to follow me. "This saying therefore," which was capable of admitting of different senses, "went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple

should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He shall not die, but so I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? This is that disciple who beareth testimony to these things, and hath written these things: and we know that his testimony is true."

CHAPTER CXLVI.

THE EIGHTH, NINTH, AND TENTH APPARITIONS OF JESUS.

MATT. XXVIII. MARK XVI. LUKE XXIV. ACTS I. 1 COR. XV.

THE angel at the sepulchre, and Christ himself, as well before as after his resurrection, had foretold that he would go before, and would manifest himself to his disciples in Galilee. It was there he had lived about thirty years, had wrought the major part of his miracles, had found the far greater part of his disciples, and was most known. There he could likewise manifest himself to a much greater number of followers, without giving any umbrage to Pilate and the ruling powers, who would probably have been alarmed had a numerous concourse of people assembled together in Judea, and at a small distance from Jerusalem. Wherefore "the eleven disciples," "went into Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," and which is generally supposed to have been Mount Thabor, on which he was transfigured, a most beautiful hill, which is exactly round, and accessible only on one side. Here "he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: and seeing him, they adored him: but some doubted," that is, they had formerly entertained doubts, and particularly St. Thomas. But now every remainder of doubt was dissipated by the splendour of his presence: and they returned to their respective homes, effectually convinced of the truth of the resurrection which they were in future to announce to the whole world, and to seal with their blood.

“After that he was seen by James,” but neither the time nor place is mentioned, “then by all the Apostles,” probably the day of his ascension, and at Jerusalem, to which place they had now returned, for the feast of Pentecost. “And Jesus approaching, spoke to them, and said: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore into the whole world, preach the gospel to every creature,” that is, to all mankind, as being, notwithstanding the diversity of nations and of tongues, the work of the same God, and created for one and the same end, viz. that of enjoying eternal happiness; and, moreover, redeemed by the same price of Christ’s precious blood. “Teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” Christ here, in a few words, describes the functions of the apostleship under three heads. Of these, the first is preaching; the second is the administration of baptism, under which term is comprised the power of administering all the other sacraments; the third is the duty of instructing the faithful in all proper rules of conduct as to their life and manners. He requires them to teach mankind both by words and example, to observe all the precepts which he had dictated; and to do all things enjoined by the gospel as necessary for eternal life. Under this head is comprised the power of establishing ecclesiastical laws and ordinances, and of enforcing the observance of them by spiritual censures.

Christ next points out the happiness of those who shall believe in him by their ministry, and the misery of those who remain in their infidelity; likewise the various gratuitous and extraordinary favours to be imparted to the faithful in the infancy of the Church, with a view to draw unbelievers to its standard, which in subsequent ages were more sparingly bestowed, and only upon those whom God was pleased to distinguish for their extraordinary sanctity.

Over and above these marks of his favour, he adds a most

solemn promise to his Church in the persons of his Apostles, of abiding visibly with it to the end of time, by a presence which will show itself in a constant protection and support, by the presence of his Spirit in a constant guidance of his Church, and even by a corporal presence in the adorable sacrament of the altar. This solemn promise necessarily implies the perpetuity and visibility of his Church to the end of the world.

“He that believeth and is baptised,” says Christ, “shall be saved : but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils : they shall speak with new tongues,” which they never learned : “they shall take up serpents,” without any prejudice ; “and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover. And behold I am with you,” and your successors, “all days, even to the consummation of the world. And eating together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard,” saith he, “by my mouth. For John indeed baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence,” that is, cleansed and sanctified by the plentiful graces he shall pour upon you. “And he said to them : These are the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets and Psalms concerning me. Then he opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures,” pointing out such particular texts as related to himself. What enlarged views, may we suppose, now presented themselves to their understandings, relative to God’s infinite love and wisdom in the redemption of man through Jesus Christ. Their eyes, which before rested in the *letter*, unable to see aught but the typical histories, now saw through them, and felt their *spirit*, like a new-born day, breaking in upon their hearts, showing Christ

unto them, and inflaming them with his love. "And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day; and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things; and" in order that you may have courage to publish them, "I will send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city till you be endued with" this "power from above. Now they who were met together," still prepossessed with the notion which they had long entertained of the temporal kingdom of Israel, "asked of him, saying; Lord, wilt thou at this time re-establish the kingdom of Israel? And he said to them," checking their inordinate curiosity: "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost, coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me" of my doctrine, of my divinity, of my incarnation and resurrection "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 6—8).

CHAPTER CXLVII.

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS INTO HEAVEN. MARK XVI. 19, 20.

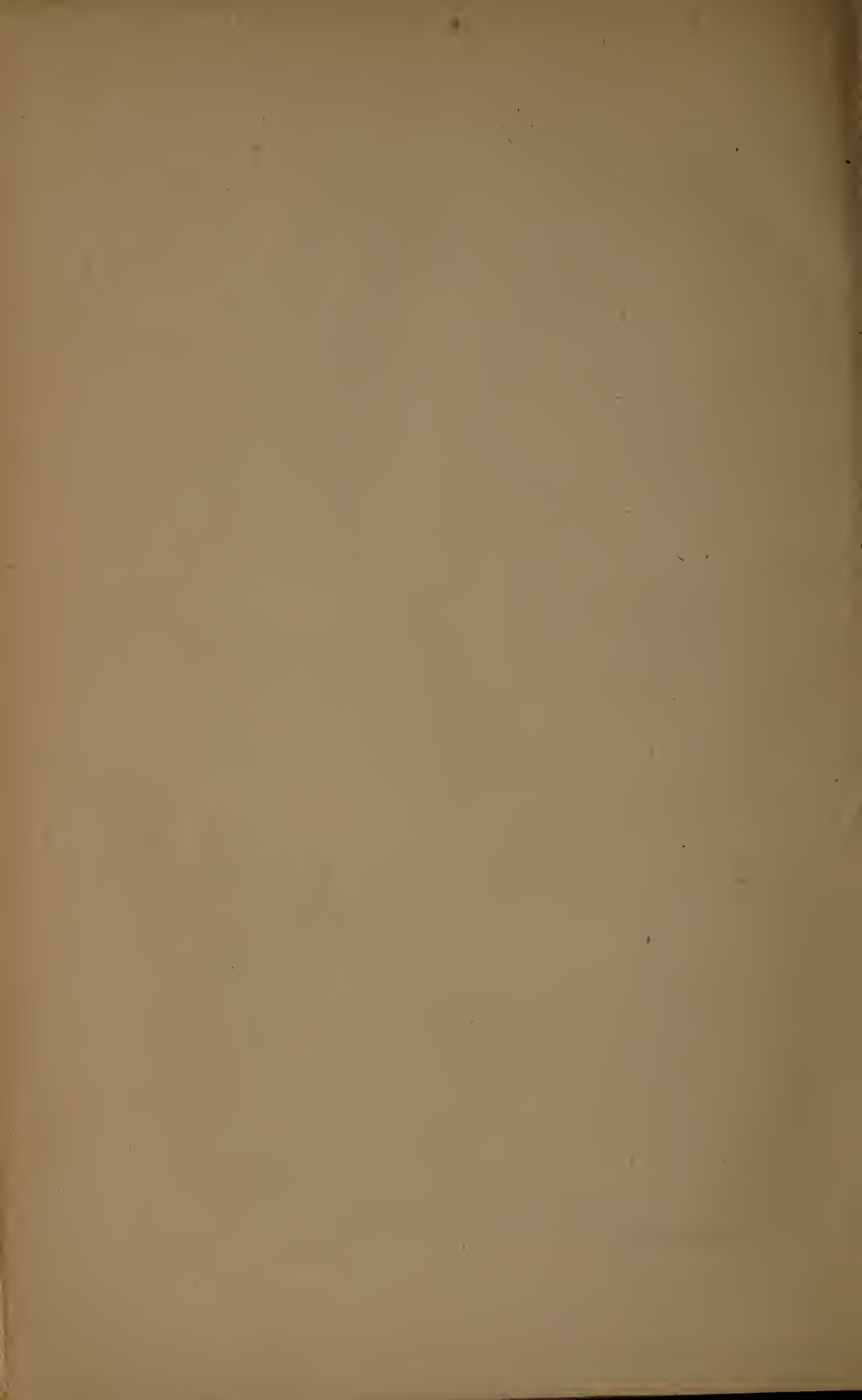
LUKE XXIV. 50—53. ACTS I. 9—11.

WE now come to the conclusion of the evangelical history, which terminates with the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. He had finished the work for which he came down from heaven and dwelt among us. He had enlightened the world by his doctrine, and redeemed it by his death: by his miracles he had confirmed the truth of his revealed religion; he had established his Church, which he commands us to hear; he had promised to assist this Church with the spirit of truth to the end of ages; he had appointed his vicar as an

universal pastor, to preside over the Church in his name, and to feed his flock, both sheep and lambs, in his absence ; nothing more remained than to take possession of that seat of bliss which he had merited for his own sacred humanity and for us. Therefore, on the fortieth day after his resurrection from the dead, "he led" his disciples "as far as Bethania," at the foot of Mount Olivet, about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem ; "and after he had spoken to them," and given them his last instructions, "while they looked on, was raised up into heaven, and lifting up his hands he blessed them ; and it came to pass whilst he blessed them, that he departed from them, and was," by his own power, gradually "carried up into heaven," about midday (May 5th), as we learn from tradition : "and a" bright "cloud received him out of their sight." This cloud was expressive of glory, and by it we may understand the attendance of angels who received and accompanied him to heaven. "And he sitteth on the right hand of God" the Father, being, as he always was, and ever will be, the same substantial and co-eternal God with him and the Holy Ghost, in one and the same divine nature, and at the same time our Advocate, our High Priest and Mediator, as man. "And while they were" attentively "beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said : Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven," in astonishment at this stupendous miracle never before seen ? "This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven ;" thus giving them a positive assurance of his second coming, viz. at the last day, to judge the living and the dead. And the Apostles "having adored" Jesus, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, as well for the incomparable glory conferred on their divine Master, as also for his promised return to make them partakers of it ; which perhaps they apprehended much nearer at hand than it really was. So they went back cheerfully "from the mount that is called Olivet, which is



THE ASCENSION.



nigh Jerusalem within a Sabbath day's journey," or about one of our measured miles: "and they were constantly in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. But," after receiving the Holy Ghost, "they, going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal," in an invisible manner by his grace, "and" exteriorly by "confirming the word with miracles that followed. But there are also many other" wonderful "things that Jesus did" upon earth, "which, if they were written in particular, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 26).

CHAPTER CXLVIII.

THE GLORIOUS LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

It is a great subject of consolation to reflect that the same glorious life into which Jesus entered by his ascension is destined also for his followers. For he acquainted his Apostles that he went to prepare a place for them; and St. Paul assures us (Heb. vi. 19, 20), that for us he *entered* heaven as our *forerunner*, that we may follow him from this time forward by hope, and that this hope is to serve us as a strong and sure anchor in the various agitations of this mortal life.

As for the life which Jesus Christ enjoys in heaven, although the Gospel represents him as sitting on the right hand of God, in order to express that happy state of perfect rest which, as man, he enjoys in the highest place of heaven; yet this rest is no impediment to his interesting himself in our behalf. In effect, as he came upon earth, not only to merit the glory of his sacred humanity, but likewise to work the salvation of all true believers, if at present there be nothing more for him to do here on earth, he has still to act for the salvation of his saints, till all of them are entered

into the participation of his glory. In heaven, therefore, he finishes this great work of man's redemption, which he began on earth. Though he be in heaven, he is still the Head of the Church here on earth, as the Apostle calls him (Ephes. i. 20); and in this quality he governs her by the pastors he gives her, enlightens her by his doctrines, sanctifies her by his sacraments, protects her by the succours of his grace, and gives her life by his spirit.

It is there that he prays incessantly for us, and as our *Advocate* (1 John ii. 1) pleads our cause before his Father; as our *Mediator* he offers him our prayers, and obtains for us those graces which we ask; and as our *High Priest* and *Victim* offers daily that same blood which he once shed on the cross for the salvation of the world. Hence St. John (Apoc. v. 6) beheld him in heaven under the figure of a lamb slain, and laid on the altar which is before the throne of God. He is there as on a throne of grace and mercy, that we may have recourse to him for seasonable aid, and may obtain the remission of our sins before he appears on the throne of his justice to judge the world. In fine, it is from heaven that he calls upon us to contemplate that glory which by the shedding of his blood he has merited for himself and for us; and he desires that the view of those eternal goods which he has prepared for us, should give us a contempt of all earthly things, and should incite us to follow him in the way he has traced out for us both by his doctrine and holy example.

If we imitate his life and death, we shall follow him in his resurrection and glory. But we must not pretend to the happiness which he now enjoys, unless we merit it as he did, and unless we walk in the same way in which he walked to arrive at it. If, on the contrary, we neglect to obey his laws, and to imitate his actions, we not only renounce the glory to which he calls us, but moreover consign ourselves to everlasting torments. For there are but two ways; one which leads to life, and the other to death; and

whoever is not in the first, by a necessary consequence walks in the last. Jesus Christ is himself the way that leads to heaven; and we walk by him when we practise the truths which he has taught, and make his life the model of ours. To live otherwise than he lived is not to follow him, but to go astray and lose ourselves. This is a point of the utmost importance, which is generally too little considered. Men examine not the way they tread, but still pursue it, and at the end of their course they find themselves ingulphed in the precipice, because they have followed the track which leads to it.

To prevent so dreadful a misfortune, Christians can do nothing more important to their salvation than to meditate continually on the life of Jesus Christ, considering it as a glass in which they are to discover their defects and blemishes. They must consider Jesus Christ on earth as their guide and their light, comparing what they do with what he did and taught; and must confess they are in darkness and out of the way, when their conduct bears not a due conformity to his example or his precepts. They must consider him in heaven as the end to which they ought continually to aspire, in order that, amidst the fatigues and difficulties of the narrow way, they may be animated by the prospect of the glory which he has promised. Finally, they must think continually on his first and second coming. The first has taught them the preparation which they ought to make for the second, since in the latter they will be judged by the instructions given them in the former. No plea shall be then allowed from the customs, examples, and false notions of the world, by a Judge who has forewarned them that he will judge them by the doctrine which himself has taught, and by the life he led and proposed as the model of theirs.

To appear therefore with confidence before him in that great day when he shall judge all men, let us listen to the admonition given us by his beloved disciple. "And now,

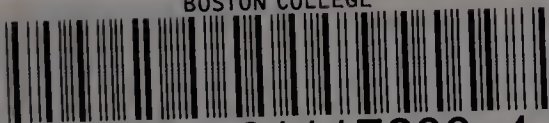
little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be confounded by him at his coming" (1 John ii. 28). And to know what it is to abide in Jesus Christ, let us seriously consider these other words of the same St. John: "He that says he abides in Jesus Christ, ought himself to walk even as he has walked" (1 John ii. 6).



THE END.

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